

PRO FILIA, PRO UXORE: YOUNG WOMEN IN THE CONVENTIONAL AND
UNCONVENTIONAL FAMILIES OF ROMAN COMEDY

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ABSTRACT

Hannah Sorscher: *Pro filia, pro uxore: Young Woman in the Conventional and Unconventional Families of Roman Comedy*
(Under the direction of Sharon L. James)

In this dissertation, I explore both the diverse variability and the traditional ideologies of the Roman family in the powerfully relevant medium of Roman comedy, with a particular focus on how different types of families in the genre treat young women. Plautus and Terence reinvented their dramatic form to depict families that would be recognizable, meaningful, and resonant for their audiences in Rome and Italy of the 200s–160s BCE. These playwrights show an expanded definition of family beyond the familiar citizen form repeatedly presented in later evidence. Around the citizen families that are the focus of the genre, they stage families of choice created by marginalized people (lower-class women and foreign soldiers in particular).

In Plautus' and Terence's plays, I identify two patterns: (1) a critique of the legal and social institutions that governed citizen family life in Rome of their day and (2) a counter-staging, as it were, of alternate models of families that contrast sharply with the citizen family in their structures, members, and priorities. Plautus and Terence critique the ideological vision of family relationships, with particular attention to the destructive effects of *patria potestas* on daughters, and they frequently stage non-legal or socially unacceptable chosen families that are oriented toward cherishing and protecting girls and young women.

In Chapter One, I give background on the genre of New Comedy and on familial norms in Roman law and in Plautus' and Terence's plays. In Chapter Two, I analyze the harm that *patria potestas* and uncaring fathers can cause for citizen daughters in Plautus' plays. In Chapter Three, I show that in contrast, in both Plautus and Terence's plays, families led by lower-class

women, often *meretrices*, protect and support the young girls in their care, even without biological kinship or the resources of citizen men. In Chapter Four, I identify a new form of relationship between foreign soldiers and the *meretrices* with whom they pursue marriage-like unions. I conclude with a discussion of the resonance and legitimacy these depictions would have granted to members of such unconventional families in Plautus' and Terence's varied and stratified audiences.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation studies the way different types of families in Roman Comedy treat daughters and young women. I argue here that Plautus and Terence expand the definition of family beyond the familiar citizen form repeatedly presented in later evidence (as discussed below). Around the citizen families that are the focus of the genre, the Roman playwrights stage families of choice, which show both similarities to and differences from the citizen families that dominate our sources on family life. These families of choice focus their priorities on the girls and young women who are important to them. In this way, Plautus and Terence critique the ideological vision of family relationships, with particular attention to the destructive effects of *patria potestas* on daughters, and they frequently stage non-legal or socially unacceptable chosen families that are oriented toward cherishing and protecting girls and young women. Thus, for example, independent *meretrices* regularly bring up lost daughters with great care, as marked in the phrase *bene ac pudice*.¹ Less obvious are the relationships that Plautine soldiers pursue with *meretrices*, which amount to marriages and new families. Such households are of no concern to Roman law and citizen society, but as my chapters show, they are frequently warmer, more supportive, and focused on the welfare and importance of individual girls and young women. By contrast, the citizen families that adhere to ideological, utilitarian views of daughters often put those girls at risk in ways that Plautus and Terence repeatedly critique. *Patria potestas* is shown as damaging both to the psyches of these girls and to their futures.

¹ Chrysis in *Andria* (274, *bene et pudice eius doctum et eductum*) and Melaenis in *Cistellaria* (172–73, *eaque educauit eam sibi pro filia / bene ac pudice*). Similarly Thais' mother in *Eunuchus: mater ubi accepit, coepit studiose omnia / docere, educere, ita ut si esset filia* (116–17). These girls are eventually restored to their families. The text of Plautus throughout is de Melo's (2011–2013) and the text of Terence is Barsby's (2011).

My umbrella term “unconventional families” implies more than one fallacy: first, that there is such a thing as a conventional family and, second, that Roman comedy depicts such families. As scholars and historians of the Roman family will attest, there is a barely a way to define the term “family,” let alone to pin down two added modifiers, and end up with a precise outline of a “conventional” “Roman” “family.”² Even if elite discourse tends to privilege a certain model of the traditional citizen family, the Roman family is characterized not by one particular form, but by its changeability, variety, and lack of conventional type (McGinn 2018, 6; Frier 2000, 808; McGinn and Frier 2003, 3–8). At the same time, in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE—when Roman comedy was being staged and produced—the Roman family did have some general overarching characteristics and norms that can be gleaned from legal, historical, and literary evidence.

In this dissertation, I explore both the diverse variability and the traditional ideologies of the Roman family in the powerfully relevant medium of Roman comedy. Plautus and Terence adapted a Greek genre—New Comedy—already intensely focused on the family. They reinvented this dramatic form to depict, over and over again, families that would be recognizable, meaningful, and resonant for their audiences in Rome and Italy of the 200s–160s BCE. In their plays, I identify two patterns: (1) a critique of the legal and social institutions that governed citizen family life in Rome of their day and (2) a counter-staging, as it were, of alternate models of families that contrast sharply with the citizen family in their structures, members, and priorities.

² As Richard Saller has shown, the English word “family” does not truly correspond with any one Latin word used to identify family structures (1994, 74–80). See also Dixon on the complexities of the term *familia*, as well as the flexibility and variation in the institution of the Roman family (1992, 1–11). The Roman *familia* or *domus* can indicate the entire household, enslaved and free, as well as the family’s properties and resources, and sometimes all relatives and kin, including ancestors (Saller 1994, 74–95). It is most often used to denote a married couple along with their slaves and freedmen (Dixon 1992, 2).

In this Introduction, I give legal and social background on the Roman citizen family: first, the institution of *patria potestas* and the evidence for its existence and importance in Plautus' and Terence's times. Next, I discuss internal evidence for family norms in the plays. Most evidence about the Roman family long postdates Roman comedy, so analysis of internal evidence points more reliably toward norms in Plautus' and Terence's times than does retrojecting later evidence. If something is repeatedly presented as normative in these plays—a son's obedience to his father, for example—we can reasonably presume that it was part of the audience's social norms. I also give a brief account of the aspects of Greek New Comedy that both relate to and contrast with Plautus' and Terence's depiction of families in their plays. I offer arguments for using Roman comedy as a source for Roman social history, and provide a short review of scholarship on the family in New Comedy. Finally, I provide an overview of the chapters to come.

***Patria potestas* and its Effects on the Roman Family**

The most important structuring principle of the family in Rome was the institution of *patria potestas*. According to ideology and law, power over the entire household rested with the oldest living male ascendant in the family, the *paterfamilias*, for as long as he lived, devolving onto the next-oldest living male ascendant thereafter. This extreme power was a phenomenon unique to Roman society, and some Romans themselves were aware that they were exceptional in this regard (Dixon 1992, 47n.37). This power included the *vitae necisque potestas*, the power

of life and death over those in his household—most strikingly, over his children.³ Roman children would go their fathers in the event of divorce, and fathers could refuse to bring up newborn infants if they chose. Children could neither own property or make wills until their *paterfamilias* died, nor could they marry without his consent. A grown man whose *paterfamilias* was living could not own his own property, or make or borrow money for himself. Like enslaved members of the household, sons could receive an allotment of funds (*peculium*) to manage, but could not legally own these assets nor profit from them.⁴ The *vitae necisque potestas*, as well as the complete financial control that a *paterfamilias* could maintain over both his descendants and his enslaved workers, has led scholars to make much of the comparison between citizen sons and the enslaved in Roman society.⁵

Fathers could disinherit, disown, or kill their sons. Evidence for disinheritance is most substantial.⁶ Sons could not own property, even property that they acquired (Saller 1994, 118):

³ For this power in particular, see McGinn 2018 (9–30), Thomas 1984, Thomas 1990 (468–70), Fayer 1994 (140–78), Yaron 1962, Harris (1986), Westbrook (1999). Shaw (2001) specifically tries to argue that the *vitae necisque potestas* was a myth; see, e.g., Capogrossi Colognesi for a rebuttal (2010).

⁴ For overviews of *patria potestas* and the powers of the Roman father, and sources, see, e.g., Crook 1967, Fayer 1994, 123–289; Saller 1994, 114–30; Dixon 1992, 36–45; Cantarella 2003, Veyne 1978, 1987, Thomas 1990, Dumont 1990. See especially Capogrossi Colognesi for an overview of scholarship on the topic (2010). For *patria potestas* in Plautus’ and Terence’s time and earlier, see Watson 1971, 28–34; Watson 1975, 40–70; McGinn 2018; see especially Amirante for his early autonomy (1988, 73–75); for the power of the father in Roman Comedy, see Dumont (1990, 479–84).

⁵ Veyne first articulated this comparison (1978, 1987). The legal similarities between them included the power of a father over the personal autonomy of a son or an enslaved person: not only could he kill, if he chose, but he was within his rights to sell both his enslaved workers and his children. The father also controlled both sons and slaves financially. Although the *peculium* could give both sons and enslaved people a good amount of freedom that they would otherwise be denied, the profits from the initial sum granted belonged to the father (Cantarella 2003, 288). If a son or enslaved person fell into debt as a result of the way he handled *peculium*, the father was not responsible. All burden of debt rested on the son or enslaved person, legally. A father’s allowance of *peculium* to one of his dependents could greatly benefit him through no effort of his own, if the venture was profitable, but could not harm him, financially, if the venture failed. See Saller 1994, 119–24 and sources for *peculium*.

⁶ See Saller for a discussion of disowning (*abdicatio*) and disinheriting (1994, 117–19).

everything belonged to the father, who could distribute his property as he pleased in his will, for the most part (Saller 1994, 119).⁷ There is little evidence that fathers actually disowned their sons or put them to death, and the frequency with which either of these practices occurred is still a matter of debate in scholarship on the Roman family. Disowning a child is very rarely attested as a historical event.⁸ The implementation of the *vitae necisque potestas* is perhaps the most uncertain and polarizing aspect of Roman patriarchy. On the one hand, it is certain that Roman fathers could refuse to raise a newborn infant, and this power was a facet of their authority over the life and death of their children (Saller 1994, 117, Dixon 1992, 40).⁹ On the other, scholars have swung back and forth as to whether the right was used in any other circumstances.¹⁰ Although it is unknown how strictly fathers exercised their *potestas* in such matters, the fact that they could was ever-present.¹¹

It is also difficult to discern how sons felt about their status. If fathers were even near as overbearing as the law allowed them to be—and as famous Roman *exempla* of paternal severity were, such as Manlius Torquatus or Brutus the Liberator—it would make sense for their sons to resent their *potestas*, especially as they grew into adulthood, married, and had children of their

⁷ See also, however, Saller's chapter on testation for some of the restrictions fathers faced (1994, 155–80).

⁸ Saller 1994, 117–18. See also Levick (1972), who argues that disowning a child is a legal institution.

⁹ For a refutation of this right, see Shaw (2001); Capogrossi Colognesi rebuts Shaw (2010).

¹⁰ For example, Saller maintains that it was not common for a father to exercise this right (1994, 115–17): “There is no reason to believe that Roman children lived their daily lives conscious of this terrible paternal power” (117). Against Saller, see Veyne (1978, 1987), Cantarella (2003). McGinn gives a concise overview of the scholarly debate with up-to-date sources and a moderate view (2018, 9–30). For a summary and discussion of the historically attested uses of the *vitae necisque potestas*, see in particular Harris (1986).

¹¹ Saller concludes that the patriarchal structure of the Roman family as it is found in the legal evidence was affected by factors other than the law and thus did not operate exactly as prescribed (1994, 130–32). As Dixon notes, it is striking how rarely Roman fathers use the powers available to them, even in the face of conflict between family members (1997, 166).

own. Indeed, scholars such as Paul Veyne have speculated that adult sons' feelings of resentment led to frequent parricides (1978, 1987). Eva Cantarella makes the insightful point that even if most adult sons did not, in practice, experience as much tyranny and control from their fathers as ideology might suggest, those who did would feel even more resentful and oppressed in comparison (2003). Regardless of the actual practice of the many rights afforded to a domineering father, *patria potestas* had the potential to breed serious conflict between fathers and sons in Rome.¹²

Patria potestas influenced Roman women and girls as well.¹³ The relationship between fathers and daughters was central in Roman society and had implications for both young girls and married women. Judith Hallett (1984) has shown how the patriarchal nature of Roman family and society gave rise to the phenomenon she terms "filiafocality," the central position of daughters in elite society. Girls were valued first for their positions as their fathers' daughters. Daughters could inherit equally with sons and were respected by their brothers. Moreover, there seems to have been regularly a strong affective relationship between fathers and daughters.

Roman marriage was also closely related to *patria potestas*. In Plautus' and Terence's times, marriage broke down into two types, conventionally known as *manus*-marriage and marriage *sine manu*.¹⁴ If a woman entered into the former type, she passed into her husband's authority and acquired the legal status of his daughter. Her assets became his (or his father's if his father was living) and she gained the right of intestate succession upon his death, just as his children would. This transition made the wife, legally, part of the kin of her married family. In

¹² Harris briefly mentions the psychological effect of this power on elite adult sons (1986, 90–91).

¹³ For the relationship between *patria potestas* and *manus* in particular, see Perelló (2007).

¹⁴ These terms are modern, not ancient (Treggiari 1991, 17).

the latter type, when a wife did not enter into her husband's *manus*, she remained under the authority of her own father until his death, at which point she would become *sui iuris*.¹⁵ This arrangement legally gave her father authority over her marriage for the duration of his life. She remained attached to, and was considered part of, her natal family.¹⁶

Sine manu marriage points to the importance of paternal authority: even when a woman married out of her natal family, she might remain legally in her father's control. Further, marriage with *manus* eventually became rarer over the republican period (Treggiari 1991, 30–35). Even if a woman did undergo *manus* marriage, when she passed into her husband's *potestas*, legally he became a father to her.¹⁷ The laws surrounding marriage in the Roman world are distinctive for their emphasis on paternal authority after marriage.

Evidence for the Roman Family in Plautus and Earlier

The overview of *patria potestas* given above is based, in most cases, on scholarship that uses a variety of evidence, most of it from periods later than Plautus' time. There is no other option than to use this scholarship when discussing the Roman family, and decades of insightful work and fruitful debate have been engaged in by the scholars cited above, to which I, and all who study Roman social history, am greatly indebted. But the fact remains that an argument

¹⁵ Her children, however, would be under the *potestas* of their father, her husband.

¹⁶ For a detailed account of the types of Roman marriage, see in particular Treggiari (1991, 16–36) and Hersch (2010, 23–27); for a concise overview of Roman marriage, see Cantarella (2002, 271–74).

¹⁷ See also Hallett on the language of certain *manus*-marriage ceremonies that likened new brides to daughters of their husbands (1984, 79, 85), although whether this language is applicable to all *manus*-marriages has been questioned by Treggiari (1991, 27) and Hersch (2010, 24).

about the Roman family as Plautus and Terence saw it cannot hold water if all its evidence postdates them. It is my contention, however, that Plautus and Terence repeatedly engage with *patria potestas* and its effects on the family in Rome. To make this argument, I provide two types of evidence: legal evidence that shows *patria potestas* existed before Plautus, and internal evidence from the plays. This internal evidence gives insight into how norms of family life in Plautus' and Terence's times accorded with later evidence about the Roman family.

The XII Tables

There remain only sparse historical sources from Plautus' time or earlier that can be used to assess the institution of the Roman family during his time. Among the few legal sources predating Plautus are the laws of the Twelve Tables, attributed to the mid-fifth century BCE. They are a problematic source, however, because their contents are difficult to ascertain.¹⁸ Only fragments and references in much later sources remain, but from this evidence, scholars generally agree that some form of *patria potestas* existed long before Plautus' day.¹⁹ Table IV of the Twelve Tables is most illuminating on this point, as it contains statutes about the father's power of life and death over his children.²⁰ Tables IV–VI also contain broader information on the generally patriarchal character of the Roman family at this time, with rules about women being

¹⁸ For background on the Twelve Tables and the difficulties surrounding them as a historical source, see Crawford (1996, 555–72), McGinn (2018, vii–xx), Humbert (2018, 1–39), Watson (1971, 5), Amirante (1988).

¹⁹ Crawford (1996, 630), Watson (1971, 28–42), McGinn (2018, *passim*, esp. 9–30), Humbert (2018, 143–48), Capogrossi Colognesi (2010, esp. 8–79), Amirante (1988, esp. 72–76).

²⁰ For discussions and commentary on Table IV, see Crawford (1996, 630–33), Riccobono (1941, 35–36), but especially Humbert (2018, 143–72), McGinn (2018), for in-depth and up-to-date discussion and sources. See 9–30 especially for the *vitae necisque potestas*.

required, in most cases, to have the guardianship of a male relative (Table V),²¹ and regulations about inheritance being passed through the male line (Table IV.4, VI). As McGinn notes, the information in the Twelve Tables does not support a view of *potestas* as an absolute, unlimited, unchanging and despotic power wielded by the *paterfamilias*. The father's position was nevertheless impressively strong. He was permitted a large amount of discretion, especially in killing his children, and regardless of how frequently he used this power it remained a powerful disciplinary tool. Overall, there is a great deal of legal, social, and economic authority for the *paterfamilias* assumed in the Twelve Tables (2018, xiv-xv).²²

Internal Evidence for Normative Behavior of Citizen Family Members

I have broken this evidence down by gender and familial role. In each section, I give an overview of later evidence and then evidence from Roman comedy that accords with it.

Citizen Men

For men in ancient Rome, the gap between childhood and adulthood was bridged over time. In the space between these stages, men were known as *iuvenis* or *adulescens*, a stage of life in which they were not children but not yet viewed as fully mature adults. There was a great deal of anxiety about this period of life for young men in Roman culture, as the potential immaturity of this group of men could pose a danger to the family and state (Harlow and Laurence 2002, 65). Men needed the guidance of older men to control their impulses in this youthful stage. As

²¹ The exception being Vestal Virgins, noted in Table V.1.

²² For a discussion about the Romans' view of this power as well as scholarly opinions, trends, and sources, see McGinn (2018, 11–30).

Harlow and Laurence put it, “In a way, youth was perceived as an illness that lasted until a man’s twenties, when he recovered and married, could take up public office and was trusted by his fellow citizens and the state” (2002, 65).²³

These dynamics play out repeatedly in Roman comedy, in a pattern that fits well with the expectations for, and anxieties about, Roman youths that are attested in later periods. Young men are viewed as inherently irresponsible, and youth as a time when profligacy and unmarriageable love interests can be excused.²⁴ The *senes* in Roman comedy constantly make these points, sometimes alluding to their own similar youthful behavior (Philoxenus in *Bacchides*; Micio in *Adelphoe*). Repeated themes and plot points also point to these social norms, such as the frequency of a father trying to move his son along to the next stage of adulthood (Simo in *Andria*) by forcing him into marriage. At the same time, the tension between a youth’s inherent immaturity and the fact that he must soon marry, become a responsible citizen, and one day be the head of a family also plays out in the comedies. For example, although sons might repeatedly waste money or have inappropriate love interests, they often fear their father’s finding out (Philolaches in *Mostellaria*, Lesbonicus in *Trinummus*; Ctesipho in *Adelphoe*, Antipho in *Phormio*). This fear implies that they know they should be on a path toward greater maturity.

Passage out of this liminal stage of youth was marked by marriage and public life or office (Harlow and Laurence 2002, 65, 76–78). The age at which men married, especially in the Republic, is a topic of debate. Evidence points towards their marrying in their mid- to late

²³ For the transition from youth to adulthood for Roman men, see Harlow and Laurence (2002, 65–78).

²⁴ For example, Philoxenus in *Bacchides* makes these points at 409–10 and 416–18; Barsby notes that his arguments are “typical of the lenient approach to young men’s love affairs,” and gives a list of comparanda (1986, ad 409f).

twenties.²⁵ There is not much corroboration or contradiction to be gleaned from Roman comedy, as the ages of men in these plays are not given explicitly. But for my purposes, the numerical age of men in these plays is not as relevant as their stage of life, which is sometimes hinted at by their occupations. When a citizen man has held a public position, for example, it can be inferred that he is at the age where it would be reasonable to expect him to marry. When he is married, the audience could expect him to act with his wife and children's interests in mind and for their benefit. Having completed some military service could be an indication that he is older than the youngest *adulescentes* and perhaps expected to be looking to settle down in the future.

These general expectations for men are visible in our plays. Diniarchus of *Truculentus* has conducted a state-sponsored mission and has been betrothed in the past, both serving as evidence that he should be ready to marry. In *Miles Gloriosus*, Pleusicles has held a state-sponsored position and is talked out of starting a family by an older man, elements suggesting that marriage and family might have been his next step. Many men who do not act in their wives' and children's best interests make excuses for this behavior (Pamphilus in *Hecyra*), try to hide it (Demaenetus in *Asinaria*, Lysidamus in *Casina*; Chremes in *Phormio*), or are punished for it (Demaenetus in *Asinaria*, Lysidamus in *Casina*). Some soldiers in Plautus' plays seek out marriage-like and long-term relationships, even if these would not be recognized legally, as I discuss in Chapter Four (the unnamed soldier in *Epidicus*, Pyrgopolynices in *Miles Gloriosus* Stratophanes in *Truculentus*). This behavior implies that some soldiers might be reaching an age where they would seek a stable relationship. Travel on family business is also a sign of trust and

²⁵ See Rosenstein (2004, 82–88) for discussion and sources about men's age at marriage in the Republic. See Saller for a specific treatment of the topic, but using evidence from later periods (1987).

responsibility in a citizen son, indicating an expectation for maturity (Pamphilus in *Hecyra*) or used as a spur to maturing (Charinus in *Mercator*).²⁶

Once a man was married and starting a family, he was expected to be responsible for the welfare of his wife and children and to manage the family's finances sensibly, especially his wife's dowry.²⁷ From both Plautus' and Terence's plays, the social norm emerges of husbands being responsible for managing their wives' dowries responsibly. If he failed in his responsibilities towards her, a wife's natal family might get involved (Matrona's father in *Menaechmi*).²⁸ In fact, internal evidence shows that men, especially heads of households, were supposed to be able to manage their money in order to provide for their families. The secrecy they feel compelled to keep when they fail at this aim, the responsibility and guilt they sometimes feel when they squander money, and the criticism they face for doing so from other characters, especially members of the household affected by their profligacy, all point to money management as an expectation for men in this period (the *senex* in *Menaechmi*, Demipho of *Mercator*, Philolaches of *Mostellaria*, both Charmides and his son Lesbonicus of *Trinummus*; Demea of *Adelphoe*, Chremes of *Phormio*). Spending money wastefully is seen as a sign of youthful irresponsibility. When older men, or men who have a degree of responsibility toward their household, act this way, it is a sign that they are not filling their expected role in society.

²⁶ Leigh discusses the theme of the father admonishing his son for not undergoing the same labor as himself in *Adelphoe*, *HT*, and *Mercator* (2004, 169).

²⁷ Indeed, the most common usage of the word *paterfamilias* refers to the head of household's responsibilities as owner and manager of property and resources, not as the father of biological children (Saller 1999). See Treggiari for the responsibilities and control of a husband regarding his wife's dowry (1991, 323–64).

²⁸ Her natal family might be even more likely to get involved if the woman had been married *sine manu* and thus remained in the *potestas* of her own father, or *sui iuris*, rather than legally in the *potestas* of her husband.

The power of the father meant that responsibility for his children's well-being rested on his shoulders. He was responsible for arranging their marriages, providing a dowry for daughters, and disciplining and guiding his sons into becoming productive members of society (Saller 1994, 114–30, 204–24). The discipline of sons was of such paramount importance that backup measures such as the *patruus* were considered necessary. The Romans distinguished between maternal and paternal uncles in terms of name and familial role. The *avunculus*, or mother's brother, could be indulgent with his sister's sons (the origin of the English term "avuncular"), but the *patruus*, the paternal uncle, was to be strict and authoritarian with his brother's sons (Bettini 1986, 27–46; Hickson 1993). This system points to the perceived danger that a father might feel too affectionate or indulgent towards his son to discipline him as much as the Roman state and cultural *mores* deemed necessary. The role assigned to the *patruus* shows that fathers were expected to take responsibility and control over their sons' upbringing and actions, but also to feel affection toward them.

In Roman comedy, the responsibilities of fathers and husbands is a central concern. This focus shows that these social norms were at play in their time periods. In Plautus' plays, a common plot device involves a father in sexual competition with his son.²⁹ The secrecy and deception practiced by such fathers, as well as the chastising they receive from various characters for their failure to act their age, indicate a discomfort with this behavior (Demaenetus in *Asinaria*, Philoxenus in *Bacchides*, Lysidamus in *Casina*, Demipho in *Mercator*).³⁰ Rather

²⁹ Konstan expresses the situation succinctly: "The narrative paradigm of rival lovers—in this case, father and son—which provides the framework for the plot is displaced by a story of women engineering the disgrace of an errant husband, who seeks to exert his authority as *paterfamilias* to violate his responsibilities to his household" (2014, 10).

³⁰ In contrast, regarding the *senex amator* in *Casina*, MacCary and Willcock conclude, "This behavior would not seem particularly improper to an ancient audience (although the Romans would no doubt feel that the father's position was undignified), so long as the girl was a slave" (1976, ad 59). Yet the audience

than discipline or guide their sons, they waste resources and time reverting to their own youth, showing that they have not fully made the expected transition from youth to adulthood, despite their comically advanced years. The *senex amator*'s competition with his son is harmful to his family: in both *Casina* and *Asinaria*, hurt and angry citizen wives must step in to rebuild the household after the actions of their incompetent and destructive husbands.³¹ This pattern of internal criticism of this behavior as well as the outcomes in which the old man is tricked based on his absurdity indicates that in Plautus' time, older men were expected to model more mature behavior, just as later sources suggest.³² Older men without sons are also ridiculed for inappropriate lust (Antipho in *Stichus*), and fathers with other shortcomings are also staged (e.g., Periphanes in *Epidicus*, Callicles in *Truculentus*).

knows, because Plautus reveals *Casina*'s status in the prologue (80–83), that Lysidamus is pursuing the citizen girl who should end up married to his son.

³¹ In contrast to their husbands' self-interest, these mothers make their sons their highest priority (James 2015, 120). This conclusion holds for mothers in Terence as well. In fact, in *HT*, the slave Syrus articulates a similar position: "All mothers tend to stand by their sons when they misbehave and defend them against their father's ill-treatment" (991–993, *matres omnes filiis / in peccato adiutrices, auxilio in paterna iniuria / solent esse*). Citizen wives often have to take over for defective fathers in terms of *patria potestas*. As Henderson comments: "*Asinaria* will not forget that its *paterfamilias* could neither block nor facilitate his son *because* the wife and mother could do both" (2006, 153, emphasis original). Konstan observes (1983, 48) that Demaenetus himself knows Artemona is fulfilling his role, controlling their son "just as fathers usually do" (79, *patres ut consueuerunt*), and further discusses her role in the resolution of the play (51), as well as Demaenetus' removal from his "position as guardian and representative of the Roman moral tradition" (55). See Braund for a discussion of the *uxor dotata* as contributing to the loss of authority of the *paterfamilias* in *Asinaria*, *Casina*, and *Menaechmi* (2005, 49–50).

³² In *Casina*, the enslaved members of the household are affected by the *senex amator* as well. Their sexual availability to Lysidamus is the premise of the play, as once "Casina" marries Olympio, Lysidamus will have sexual access to her as well. Her availability to him is actually staged as he fondles the slave disguised as Casina on the "wedding" night. Further, even Olympio's sexual availability to his master is alluded to, and it is likely that Pardalisca, a female slave who assists Cleostrata with the plot, has been taken advantage of by Lysidamus in the past as well, although, as Richlin notes, "The sexual jeopardy of female household slaves is largely erased from the plays" (2017, 309). See Richlin for a discussion of the sexual availability of slaves in Plautus (2017, 105–126).

Daughters were far more vulnerable than sons and faced a different set of social expectations. As head of household, a father was supposed to make sure his daughters were safe, provided for, and chaste until they could be married, at which point he was responsible for arranging advantageous marriages and providing dowries.³³ In Roman comedy, this expectation is made clear in *Andria*, in which Chremes articulates the vulnerable position of his daughter and his concern over her marriage, and in *Phormio*, in which a different Chremes fails to provide for his daughter's marriage,³⁴ prompting harm and risk to her and her mother and feelings of guilt in his own case.³⁵ In Chapter Two, I discuss similar patterns in four Plautine dramas. The responsibility of a father toward his daughter is shown to be discharged admirably by the old men in *Trinummus*, but fathers who do not act in their daughters' best interest, particularly with regard to marriage, are criticized in *Aulularia*, *Stichus*, and *Persa*. The criticism of these latter fathers' behavior by their daughters and other characters shows that a disregard for a daughter's future runs contrary to social norms, while the concern of the old men in *Trinummus* for the

³³ On the responsibility of a father toward his children, see Saller (1994, 114–30). On dowries in particular, see Treggiari (1991, 323–31) and Saller (1994, 204–24).

³⁴ See Maltby for a summary of Chremes' plans for his illegitimate daughter Phanium (2012, ad loc). He wants to avoid allowing her to marry a stranger, because he is worried his wife will discover his second family and kick him out of the house (586–87). His brother Demipho assists him in this pursuit (Konstan 1983, 120; Frangoulidis 2013, 287), even though Demipho was put in awkward position earlier in the play because Chremes had not yet come clean about his affair (Frangoulidis 2013, 286). Konstan points out that Chremes' secret bigamy contributes to "an aura of illegitimacy" surrounding Phanium, whose legal status is at times "dubious and peripheral" (1983, 123).

³⁵ Chremes in *Phormio* is also a father, like Demaenetus in *Asinaria* and Lysidamus in *Casina*, whose defects hurt his wife and require her to step up and fulfill his role. Frangoulidis points out that in Terence's *Phormio*, Chremes' metaphorical death after his wife Nausistrata finds out about his second family symbolizes that he loses all control of his household (2013, 292). She questions his behavior (1041), as well as the value of his old age, outright: "if old age makes men virtuous" (1023, *senectus si verecundos facit*). Nausistrata, like the wives in *Casina* and *Asinaria*, resolves the situation and redistributes Chremes' rights as father to his son (1043–46, Frangoulidis 2013, 293). "The play closes with the matron, the youth, and the parasite in command, while the two old men are humbled and obedient. The *Phormio* began with a son in dread of his father; it ends with a father at the mercy of his son" (Konstan 1983, 128). Similarly Goldberg: "The play ends as Nausistrata commands" (1986, 89).

young woman's dowry, position in her married family, and happiness shows that fathers could be expected to behave responsibly toward daughters.

The fathers in Roman comedy even struggle with the conflicting expectations of the Roman father (affection and discipline), and some do better at achieving a balance than others. In Terence's *Adelphoe* and *HT*, fathers who go far in the pursuit of strict discipline find that the results are unsatisfactory and that they have lost their children's affection (Demea in *Adelphoe*, Menedemus in *HT*).³⁶ Yet Terence also questions whether unrestrained parenting is necessarily more effective (Micio in *Adelphoe*).³⁷ The fact that these concerns about fatherhood and its attendant responsibilities are central to many of Terence's plays shows that these concerns were relevant to the time and culture in which he composed and staged his plays.³⁸ Although legal and

³⁶ As Traill notes, it comes as a surprise that Demea wants affection, but "paternal affection is as much a part of Demea's temperament as being hot tempered and tight-fisted" (2013, 334). Similarly, as Konstan notes, Demaenetus in Plautus' *Asinaria* wants to be lenient towards his son Argyrippus in order to gain his affection (65–77, 835), although he turns out to have other motives for his conduct as well as the play progresses (1983, 48, 53–54). Lape notes that in *HT*, Menedemus' experience "suggests that affective ties between fathers and sons could serve as an important check on paternal power" (2004b, 44).

³⁷ Lape examines Terence's criticism of Roman fatherhood and *patria potestas* through the father-son relationships in *Adelphoe*, *Andria*, and *HT*, concluding that the plays provide an important perspective on the difficult role of sons who are still under their father's power as young men, although the plays end with affirmation of the father-son bond in the Roman system (2004b). See Johnson for a discussion of the two fathers in *Adelphoe*, focusing on what he identifies as Micio's self-deception and self-contradiction. He agrees that the play is not primarily concerned with identifying the best type of fatherhood: "The *Adelphoe* is less concerned with two rival theories of education in conflict or with a confrontation between a gentleman and a boor than it is with two self-satisfied men who are made to collide in order that we may witness the universality of self-satisfaction and its inevitable frustrations" (1968, 172). Scholarship on the conclusion of *Adelphoe* is too numerous to list here; see Johnson's sources (171–172, nn. 1–4). More recently, Traill gives concise overviews of the ambiguities at the ending of the play and scholarship on it (2013, 319–320, 326–329). Gratwick concludes in Demea's favor (1999, ad 985, 986, 997), but Martin says that the play "ends on a note of moderation" (1976, 29), and Lape too notes that both fathers have something to offer in the end (2004b, 49).

³⁸ Traill discusses Terence's focus on parenting in *Adelphoe*: "Terence elaborates the motivations of stock characters in stock situations. He provides more information than the genre technically requires to explain what are, essentially, conventional behaviors, in order to invite reflection about the impact of parenting approaches on father-son relationships" (2013, 320). Goldberg points out that *Adelphoe*'s concern with *patria potestas* is aimed at an audience attuned to Roman morality (1986, 103), as does Fantham, who reads the play as especially addressed to sons (2004b, 31).

historical evidence for the responsibility of a father toward his sons might be available only for periods later than Terence's, these plays show that the conflicting but critical responsibilities of a father toward his sons were also felt in his time.³⁹ In Plautus' plays, different types of fathers are not contrasted as thematically as in Terence's, but Plautus does stage a variety of fathers. Some older men are stricter fathers who want their sons to marry, whereas some are lenient toward youth, and the *senes amatores* act as youths themselves. In a different way, more hostile to and critical of the institution of the *paterfamilias*, Plautus' plays also show that Roman fathers might have had difficulty balancing their complete authority as fathers with their responsibility to guide and protect their children.

Citizen Women

Roman women had a very different life course. The most important part of their life was marriage, and the wedding instantly marked the transition to adulthood. Before marriage, a girl was expected to remain chaste and to be dutiful to her parents, to her father in particular. Once married, she might or might not remain in his *potestas*, but she was also expected to be dutiful and respectful toward her husband. Marriage in ancient Rome was officially arranged for the purpose of producing children (*pro liberorum quaerendorum causa*), so her main role was to be both a wife and a mother (Harlow and Laurence 2002, 58; Treggiari 1991, 8; Dixon 1988, 71).

³⁹ Even though Terence does not stage the *senex amator*, his father-figures can be immature and driven by lust. For example, Chremes in *Phormio* has a wife and son, but without their knowledge he also has a second wife and daughter on Lemnos. At one point, the titular Phormio accuses him and his brother, also a *senex*, of having "puerile attitudes" (949, *puerili sententia*). See Frangoulidis for context and discussion of this passage (2013, 291). Terence's fathers have also been linked to Plautus'. Lefèvre notes that Chremes in *HT* and Micio in *Adelphoe* do not have models in Menander's drama (2013, 248), but they reflect Plautus' *senes* (253). This intense interest in the conduct of older men seems particular to the Roman authors.

Mothers were responsible for the education and upbringing of their sons and daughters. They had to teach their daughters how to be good wives and mothers, but also took a hand in their son's education. They would have been expected to want the best for all their children. Although such major life events as engagements, marriages, and careers (for men) would have been the purview of the father, mothers could be involved in these issues, especially if they had money or connections of their own that could be used to the advantage of their children.⁴⁰

Roman comedy provides a great deal of evidence about the expectations for women of different ages and statuses in Plautus' and Terence's time periods. The unmarried citizen daughters in these plays are, as can be expected, concerned with their prospects for marriage. They are aware that they must remain chaste and also be dutiful toward their fathers (Phaedria in *Aulularia*, Virgo in *Persa*). The citizen wives have more complicated situations. In some comedies, they do their utmost to be good wives and obedient to their husbands (Alcumena in *Amphitruo*, Panegyris and Pamphila in *Stichus*; Philumena in *Hecyra*). In others, however, they are in conflict with their husbands, usually because of his bad behavior, even when the husbands wrongly blame their wives (Artemona in *Asinaria*, Cleustrata in *Casina*, Matrona in *Menaechmi*; Sostrata and Myrrhina in *Hecyra*, Nausistrata in *Phormio*). These plays touch on realities of marriage in ancient Rome, in which a woman might have had seriously conflicting loyalties between her husband, her natal family, and her own children, complicated by finances. Whether or not she brought a dowry into the marriage would have affected the gender-based power dynamic.

⁴⁰ Indeed, Saller uses Terence's *HT* as evidence for a mother's involvement in the betrothal process (1994, 128). For the mother's involvement in arranging marriages, see Treggiari (1991, 134–38, and 125–34 for more examples). On the mother's role in her children's life in general, see Dixon (1988, 168–232).

Citizen mothers in Roman comedy are uniformly concerned for the well-being of both their sons and their daughters, as Sharon James has shown (2015). Their efforts to make sure their sons are happy and successful and their daughters protected point to the fact that these were responsibilities of mothers in Plautus' and Terence's times. These women look out for their sons' advantage and help them when they are in trouble. Where daughters are concerned, they tend to be far more anxious about these girls' marriage prospects, vulnerability, and safety, as daughters are far more at risk than sons. As I discuss in Chapter Three, non-citizen women in Roman comedy also exhibit this concern for their children or the children they foster.

Citizen Children

In Roman society, children were expected to be dutiful and obedient toward their parents, especially toward their fathers. The expectation was for unswerving filial *pietas* toward the father, as head of household, but also for obedience and respect toward the mother (Dixon 1988, 221). These expectations and parent-child dynamics are often central in Roman comedy. Because children were under their father's *potestas* until his death, and he was involved in arranging their marriages and even in their married life, the dynamics between parent and "child" are relevant for Romans well into adulthood (Harlow and Laurence 2002, 35–36). In Roman comedy, sons are always expected to obey their father's commands, such as to conduct a certain kind of business or to marry or settle down. The secrecy of disobedient sons going against their father's wishes and their fear of discovery indicate that the social norm of the times was for fathers to be obeyed (Philolaches in *Mostellaria*, Lesbonicus in *Trinummus*; Antipho in *Phormio*). Filial *pietas* is openly discussed as a virtue that both daughters and sons are expected to possess

(*Asinaria*, *Persa*, *Stichus*). Less frequently, the duty of obedience of a child to a mother takes a central position (*Cistellaria*; *Hecyra*).

The staging of sons in Roman comedy also indicates their subjugation to their father's *potestas* in this period. Roman comedy, at times, likens citizen sons to the enslaved.⁴¹ As Holt Parker has shown, the citizen son and the enslaved trickster who plots on his behalf have intertwined roles in Roman comedy: the trickster can act against the father and other blocking characters with more freedom than the *adulescens*, removing from the younger master any guilt about scheming and thwarting his own father. In turn, at the end of the play, the citizen son keeps the enslaved trickster from being punished. Parker explains these patterns using Roman social history, noting that ancient sources allude to citizen and enslaved children being raised together on estates. In Roman comedy, the two figures work together to subvert the father's authority on behalf of the *adulescens*, and then to mitigate his punishment of the enslaved trickster (*Mostellaria*). That this teamwork is consistently necessary to drive and resolve the plots of Roman comedy shows that both citizen and enslaved are envisioned by Plautus and Terence as subject to the father. This plot type also shows the father's authority as so great that it takes both his son and enslaved trickster acting together to go against his wishes.

Citizen Married Couples

Although I do not explore the relationship between husband and wife at length in this dissertation, I provide an overview here. The ideal relationship of a Roman married couple was characterized in later texts by *concordia* (e.g., Dixon 1992, 70, Treggiari 1991, 251–53, Harlow

⁴¹ See Parker (1989, 243), Konstan (1983, 62–64), and Fitzgerald (2019) for discussions of the similarities between slaves and *adulescentes* in Roman comedy, as well as between slaves and all free members of a *familia* subject to *patria potestas*.

and Laurence 2002, 59). Roman comedy, however, shows a real sense of how marital harmony and power dynamics might have been affected by the wife's dowry. Wives were supposed to be dutiful and obedient towards their husbands, a virtue summed up in the adjective *morigera* (Williams 1958, Treggiari 1991, 229–30). But the comic dowered wife is stereotyped as a nagging shrew who has the household and her miserable husband under her thumb—at least according to that husband. A subservient wife is rarer, perhaps typified by Alcumena in *Amphitruo*, who is repeatedly described as *morigera*, but stands up for herself throughout the play.

The unfairness of the stereotype the dowered wife suffers has been explored in scholarship (Krauss 2004) and is internally critiqued in the plays, as these women tend to be seriously wronged by their husbands rather than abusive toward them.⁴² Husbands who treat their wives badly are punished for their behavior (Demaenetus in *Asinaria*, Lysidamus in *Casina*; Chremes in *Phormio*).⁴³ This outcome implies that in general, in Plautus' and Terence's time,

⁴² In *HT*, Chremes' exercise of power harms both his wife and his daughter. He is verbally abusive to his wife throughout the play (e.g., 633–643; 880–881; 1006–1009; 1019–1022). Brothers takes Chremes' "rude and overbearing" treatment of his wife Sostrata as evidence for "the unattractive side of his character" (1988, 19). Years earlier, Chremes forced his wife to expose their baby daughter (626), who grew up at risk as a result (639–643), and he envisions prostitution and slavery as potential futures for the girl if left alive (Brothers 1988, ad 640). In *Phormio*, Chremes' behavior also affects multiple women in his family: when his wife Nausistrata finds out about his second family, she is wounded (1006–1025). His second wife dies unable to find him because he has used a false name with her. Her enslaved nurse explicitly blames Chremes for her death (750, *matrem ipsam ex aegritudine hac miseram mors consecutast*). In *Hecyra*, the fathers Laches and Phidippus blame their wives for the breakup of their children's marriage, whereas in reality the women are doing all that they can to keep the family together (Slater 1988). Goldberg calls both husbands "abusive" and both wives "innocent" (1986, 154). For the treatment of these women as well as general misogyny in Terence, see Oliveira (2004). For abuse of wives in Plautus, see Braund (2005, 46–48).

⁴³ Strobel remarks that the positive comments about marriage in Terence usually come from characters who are not married (2004, 180). Braund discusses "the essential paradox of Roman comedy: that while marriage is the objective of the essential comic plot, already-established marriage is portrayed as a negative experience about which husbands and wives complain and from which husbands fantasize their escape" (2005, 40). Indeed, Strobel reads Terence as pessimistic about marriage overall: the best-case scenario is one in which the man and woman are friendly towards each other (2004, 186).

men were supposed to treat their wives with respect and take their best interests into account, despite the complicated nature of any marital relationship, especially where finances are concerned.

Background: The Family in Menander

Roman Comedy derives from Greek New Comedy, of which only a small fraction, mostly fragmentary, remains extant. The only playwright of Greek New Comedy whose work survives substantially is Menander. Only one of his plays, however, survives complete, and we have overall only a tiny amount of his corpus. Plautus and Terence based their own plays on New Comic playwrights besides Menander (e.g., Diphilus, Demophilus, Philemon, Alexis, and Apollodorus), as well as on plays of Menander that did not survive, or are extremely fragmentary.⁴⁴

Many attempts have been made to determine how closely Plautus and Terence stuck to the original plays they adapted, and how much they innovated. I address this issue only where it is directly relevant. My argument addresses what is Roman, particularly with regard to the Roman family, about Roman comedy, but this comparison is difficult to make without most of Greek New Comedy. After consideration of extant Menandrian drama, however, a series of revealing differences from Roman comedy becomes apparent. First, Menander's overall depiction of citizen families is consistent, focusing heavily on resolution within and creation of

⁴⁴ E.g., *Dis Exapaton* (Plautus' *Bacchides*), *Synaristosai* (Plautus' *Cistellaria*), *Adelphoi B* (Plautus' *Stichus*), *Andria* and *Perinthia* (Terence's *Andria*), *Eunuchus* and *Kolax* (Terence's *Eunuchus*), *Heauton Timoroumenos* (Terence's *Heauton Timoroumenos*), and *Adelphoi A* (Terence's *Adelphoe*). For the sources of Plautus' and Terence's plays, see De Melo's (2011–13) and Barsby's (2001) introductions to each.

citizen families. As Susan Lape has shown, Menander's plays tend to end with a marriage between two Athenian citizens, and sometimes more than one marriage (e.g., *Aspis*, *Dyskolos*, *Perikeiromene*, *Samia*, *Sikyonioi*).⁴⁵ Lape argues that Menander's focus on creating a new family unit that can procreate to produce more Athenian citizens at the end of his plays is a reaffirmation of the values of Athenian democracy (2004). Although Menander's political leanings or lack thereof have been the subject of much scholarly interpretation, with widely varying results,⁴⁶ even scholars who disagree about his politics agree about his central focus on the citizen family. Wilfred Major argues that Menander portrays a stable Athenian community under Macedonian rule "so that household and family members can make their primary concern the conjugal, financial, and emotional rectitude of their homes" (1997, 63).⁴⁷ William Owens, although identifying Menander's politics as essentially oligarchic, identifies the important theme of *epimeleia* in the play: "Menander characterizes *epimeleia* as the solicitous care that one owed to family members" (2011, 359). All politics aside, Menander is invested in the wholeness, reconciliation, and procreation of the Athenian citizen family.

This is not to say that Menander's families are conflict-free: as in Roman comedy, conflict between family members and within relationships drive his plots. The difference lies in

⁴⁵ See also Brown (1990) and Sommerstein (1998) on love plots and resolution in Menander.

⁴⁶ The contention of scholars that Menander's work is apolitical or escapist (e.g., Wiles 1984) was countered by Wilfred Major's argument that he is in fact aligned politically with the Macedonian rulers of Athens (1997). Both Lape and William Owens counter these views, with Owens arguing, in response to Lape's take on Menander's plays as democratic, that in fact they promote the values of oligarchy while throwing a bone to the democrats in the audience with a "comforting but specious egalitarian vision" (2011, 371).

⁴⁷ Major also notes that the goal of both Menander's *Aspis* and *Samia* is "obtaining a proper marriage and economic security" (1997, 70), and that Menander took for granted in his plays that "the citizenry of Athens and other city-states would prosper if they considered it their civic duty to maintain a strong household" (72).

Menander's resolutions and in his characters' intentions. For example, in both Terence's *Hecyra* and Menander's *Epitrepontes*, a married couple's future is threatened because the woman has borne a child engendered by a pre-marital rape. In *Epitrepontes*, when the husband Charisios is found to have been the rapist, he is deeply repentant of his rejection of his wife, and she desperately wants to make the marriage work throughout the play. In Terence's *Hecyra*, on the other hand, when the husband Pamphilus finds out he is the rapist, he is not repentant at all, merely joyful. The audience never hears from his wife. Many scholars have noted these differences between the two plays, and the lack of resolution and repentance in Terence's version.

Plautus' plays, in a different vein, dispense with the Menandrian marriage plot altogether. Sharon James has shown that few of Plautus' plays end with resolution through citizen marriage (2020). As both W.S. Anderson (1993) and Amy Richlin (2014, 2017) have discussed, Plautus centers the enslaved characters in his dramas. At the close of Menander's extant dramas, marriages occur, and any father-son conflict has been resolved.⁴⁸ Plautus and Terence are less interested in both marriage and conflict resolution between family members. Although it is of course possible that Menander's other dramas were different from his extant plays, there is no reason to consider this likely.

⁴⁸ For studies of fathers and older men in Menander, see MacCary (1971), Barsby (1985), and Berg (2008). For a close look at one father-son pair, see Grant, who discusses the unsuccessful nature of the relationship between Demeas and Moschion in *Samia* (1986).

How Roman Is Roman Comedy?

The question of whether plays featuring characters with Greek names, operating in Greek settings, can be used as source material for Roman social history, or whether Roman audiences identified with these characters, has been long addressed by scholars of Roman comedy and history. I consider Roman drama a valid and important source for social history, and a genre meant and received as containing elements of Roman reality, and relevant to Roman audiences.⁴⁹ Many scholars have discussed this, but I will briefly outline a few proofs.

To begin with, Roman comedy, especially Plautus' drama, is full of references to the Roman world. His plays often refer to spaces in the Forum Romanum, where Roman comedy was originally performed, as well as at theater precincts throughout the city.⁵⁰ Most notably, a passage from *Curculio* (466–86), in which the Choragus provides a tour of places in the Roman forum,⁵¹ has been analyzed in this regard: the places he lists correspond to what an audience

⁴⁹ See Dutsch, James, and Konstan's approach to the Roman context and audiences of these dramas, along with their sources (2015, 4–5). For the plays' relevance to Romans despite adaptation from Greek models, as well as their value for analyzing Roman society, see Konstan (1983, 15–32). For the genres of performance that influence these plays, and their evolution as a genre, see Marshall (2006, 1–15) and Richlin (2017, 9–20). Leigh discusses the Greece portrayed in Plautus' drama: "It is therefore a Greece which invites constant reflection on what it is to be a Roman" (2004, 55); see Telò for a general account of Roman adaptation from Greek predecessors as well as up-to-date sources (2019).

⁵⁰ As Goldberg notes, permanent theaters in Rome greatly postdate the original composition and performance dates of Roman comedy. The earliest Roman theater was the Theater of Pompey (55 BCE), built at least a century after the deaths of both Plautus and Terence, and earlier references to theater space and buildings cannot be taken as historical record (Goldberg 2018, 141, 142n.5). Roman comedies were likely often performed in the temple precinct of the god being honored at whichever state-sponsored festival was hosting theatrical productions. This location created a physical link between the festival and the deity (Goldberg 2018, 149, 149n.20); conversely, performances at funeral games and the *ludi Romani* likely took place in the forum (152). For accounts and images of the temporary theater space in which Roman comedies were originally staged, including evidence from texts, vase painting, wall painting, and digital reconstructions, see Goldberg (2018).

⁵¹ The places the Choragus lists include the Comitium (470), shrine of Cloacina (471), the Temple of Castor (481), the Vicus Tuscus (483), potentially the Cloaca Maxima (470), the *lacus Curtius* or *lacus Juturnae* (477), the *forum piscarium* (474), the Velabrum (483), an unidentified basilica (472), and an unidentified landmark (*Leucadia Oppia*, 485). See Goldberg for discussion of all these places and

viewing the play would have been able to see when seated in the Forum.⁵² Roman comedies were not only staged in central Roman spaces, but also, at times, the action of the play itself might have been meant to be envisioned as taking place in them. The plays were probably performed both at Roman festivals and around central Italy by traveling troupes (Richlin 2017, 14–17).⁵³

Beyond geography, Roman comedies are full of anachronistic references to Roman events, people, and institutions. The dramas of both Plautus and Terence, for example, abound in references to political offices, as Donald Earl has shown (1960).⁵⁴ Most relevant to my work, the Roman playwrights often discuss family relationships using Roman terms, such as the focus on *pietas* owed by children to their parents, a virtue central to the Roman system of family values (Konstan 1983, 17). As Konstan puts it, “We may understand ancient comedy, therefore, as an enactment and resolution of conflicts generated by the system of values itself” (1983, 17).⁵⁵

problems with their identification and the resulting effort to place the performance space of *Curculio* (2018, 158–63).

⁵² Moore posits that the audience would be able to see these landmarks from an east-facing stage south of the comitium (1991, 359; 1998, 131–39). See Goldberg for revision and complication of this conclusion, as well as sources. He casts into doubt whether the topical references in the *Curculio* can precisely anchor the performance space of the play, but the references to contemporary places in and around the Roman forum remain (2018, 158–66). See also Wiseman (2015, 57), Marshall (2006, 40–43).

⁵³ See Richlin for a detailed overview of the historical and performance context of Plautus’ plays in particular (2017, 1–67), as well as Leigh, who treats both Plautus’ and Terence’s dramas (2004, 1–12). See Segal for a brief introduction to the festival context of performance (1987, 7–14).

⁵⁴ For contemporary politics in Plautus and Terence, see also Leigh (2004) and Germany (2019). For the complications surrounding the aspects of both Greek and Roman law in Roman comedy, see Bartholomä and sources (2019).

⁵⁵ He continues to discuss the relationship between ancient comedy and ideology (165–167), particularly regarding family relationships (17–20). Dutsch also notes that “Theatre is both a product of and a contributing factor to contemporary ideologies” (2019, 216; see also 2008, 41–46). Richlin notes the varied statuses in the makeup of a Roman audience (2017, 1–2). Both citizen and non-citizen Romans watched the plays, and so non-citizen families would have resonated with audiences. Indeed, the actors themselves were socially marginalized people (Richlin 2017, 20; Fitzgerald 2019, 195–196). See

Except for Plautus' *Amphitruo*, Roman Comedy also tends to feature average people, rather than the kings, gods, and heroes of much ancient literature and drama. But even *Amphitruo* stays within a fixed set of stock characters, many of them members of families and households: the *senex*/father; the *uxor*/mother; the *adulescens*; the *virgo*; the *servus*, often *callidus* (enslaved trickster); the *ancilla*, the *nutrix*, the *meretrix*; the parasite; the banker; and, in Plautus' plays, the *leno* or *lena*. Members of the Roman audience of all ages and walks of life could have seen themselves in these figures in many different plays. The plays are a valuable source for social history because they gain much of their effectiveness from being at least partially representative of real Roman people, and their lives and families.⁵⁶

Indeed, later Latin literature is proof that the Romans did see New Comedy as relevant and reflective of their own lives. In the *Pro Caelio*, Cicero uses tropes and figures from Roman comedy to illustrate and make relevant the case he is trying against the notorious Clodius and his family (Geffcken 1973). In Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, the historian chooses to recount the

McCarthy for a consideration of how Plautus' plays would have resonated with both enslaved people and their owners in the audience (2004); Richlin, among others, takes a very different view of the way enslaved viewers might have responded to Plautus.

⁵⁶ At the same time, I remain aware that the plays were populated by stock characters and acted by men wearing masks. See Sharrock for an insightful overview that questions how repetitive the stock scenes and situations in Roman Comedy actually are (2019, 8–14). See also Brown for the variety in the plots of New Comedy (1990, 243–246). As Richlin notes, though, conclusions about the gender and costuming of the actors are not certain (2017, 14). Richlin considers the performance of female roles by male actors to be a type of drag; for an in-depth consideration of how to analyze gender in the plays accordingly, see, e.g., Richlin, with sources (2017, 281–302, 2015), and Dutsch (2015). See Marshall on the role of masks in Roman comedy (2006, 126–158). The plays were also written within the confines of their genre and prioritized considerations other than realism, such as humor and entertainment. Sharrock writes, “It is worth stressing that Roman comedy, as a genre, has dramatic entertainment as its primary goal” (2019, 4). I also recognize that these plays were originally experienced through performance rather than through written text, as they have come down to us. Indeed, improvisation played a large part in the performance of these plays (Marshall 2006, 245–279); see Marshall's work for in-depth studies and sources on the performance of Roman comedy (2006, 2019). See Richlin for a discussion of the oral transmission of Plautus' plays (2017, 10). Terence's plays, on the other hand, were likely written to be read as well as performed (Germany 2013, 225–226). See Sharrock, however, for the importance of the words in the plays and the value of the scripts as written (2019, 5).

Bacchanalia scandal of 186 BCE (39.8–19) using tropes and characters from Roman comedy (Walsh 1996). Finally, in Roman love elegy, poets often draw on the genre to represent their beloveds (James 1998b). Although Roman comedy is inherited from Athens and usually features Greek names and settings, Romans saw themselves in the genre.

Roman comedy was originally performed at major state-sponsored events and religious festivals. Sometimes the themes of the plays reflected the original context and venue, further showing how these dramas could have resonated particularly with a Roman audience. For example, Matthew Leigh has argued that Terence's *Adelphoe* was uniquely suited for performance at the funeral games of L. Aemilius Paullus.⁵⁷ The sons who organized Paullus' funeral games had been given up for adoption, like one of the sons in Terence's play; Paullus was known for attentiveness to fatherhood, the play's foremost issue; and the major themes in the play, such as the proper upbringing of sons, and city life vs. country life, were important topics of debate in elite Roman society at the time (Leigh 2004, 158–62). This example shows that Roman comedy could be deeply integrated into Roman current events, debates, and society.

Despite the settings, titles, and character names of Roman comedy, Plautus and Terence did not produce translated copies of Greek originals. The question of how much they owe to their Greek originals is probably the most studied in all scholarship on Roman comedy. Again, I address this question only briefly, to point out that scholarship has moved over to focus less on this issue, and to consider Plautus and Terence to have more agency overall in creating their dramas than was thought previously. Evidence such as the references to Roman law and politics in the work of both playwrights, and comparison between plays and their Greek originals when possible—both types of evidence already discussed—show how Plautus and Terence innovate.

⁵⁷ For discussion of how Terence's plays would have been staged at these funeral games, see Goldberg (2018, 150–56).

Further, Terence frequently discusses in his prologues how he combines multiple Greek originals to form new plots for his plays, a phenomenon known as *contaminatio*.⁵⁸

In addition, although it is impossible to know for sure whether or not Plautus and Terence were modifying originals or not in individual passages, given the amount of Greek New Comedy that has been lost, scholars—pioneered by Eduard Fraenkel (2007 [1922])—have agreed that some passages in Roman comedy were unlikely to have been included in Greek originals. For example, both A. J. Brothers (1988) and David Konstan (1995) have analyzed a dialogue between the *meretrix* Bacchis and the pseudo-*meretrix* Antiphila in Terence’s *Heauton Timoroumenos* to conclude that it is highly unlikely that this conversation was in one of Terence’s Menandrian sources. Konstan notes that Menander’s Athenian audience was not likely to be amenable to the elision of status difference that takes place in this conversation regarding Antiphila and Clinia’s relationship—as he puts it, “The apparent assimilation of concubine to the position of legitimate wife” (1995, 125).⁵⁹ Although as Konstan admits, we will never know for sure, such scenes show that it is at least reasonable to consider it possible, even likely, that Plautus and Terence invented portions of their plays from scratch. Similarly, W. S. Anderson (1993, 3–29) and Michael Fontaine (2014, 519–26) have analyzed *Bacchides* alongside a corresponding fragment of the original, *Dis Exapaton*, to show that Plautus innovates in his adaptations to a great degree, especially for his Roman audience.

⁵⁸ On *contaminatio* in Terence, see, e.g., Caston (2014), Goldberg (1986, 91–122). In addition, as Goldberg points out, the experience of performing and viewing at the Theater of Dionysus in Athens was wildly different from the temporary, non-enclosed, and changeable performance space that characterized the original performances of Roman comedy. Awareness of these differences has implications for scholars looking into the transition from Greek to Roman New Comedy (Goldberg 2018, 166–68).

⁵⁹ For Brothers’ discussion: 1988, 16–17, ad 381–92.

Finally, although the major influence on Roman comedy is Greek New Comedy, the Roman playwrights were also influenced by native Italian dramatic forms. There has been a good amount of scholarship focused on the influence of the *fabulae Atellanae* in particular on Roman comedy. The *Atellanae* were Italic farces also featuring fixed stock characters, and it is thought that part of Plautus' stage name (Maccius) might have been crafted based on one of these figures (Maccus).⁶⁰ The influence of Italian drama on Roman comedy means that these plays would not have been received as purely Greek, and thus alien, by Roman audiences.

Scholarship on the Family in Roman Comedy

New Comedy is a genre about family. The family is essential to the plot, characters, and themes, and so it is has been necessary to study family relationships in comedy to study the genre at all comprehensively. Accordingly, much scholarship on Menander, Plautus, and Terence has already taken up family relationships to varying degrees. The most well-explored family relationships in scholarship are those between citizens, especially in Menander's theater. For example, Susan Lape (2004) shows that Menander's plays promote the ideals of Athenian democracy and citizenship through the marriage plot, in which civic fertility is championed when two young citizens marry at the close of a play (116).⁶¹ Relationships between citizens in Menander's comedy are also analyzed by Dana Sutton (1993), who discovers tension in the relationships between fathers and sons, as well as between the young and the old more generally.

⁶⁰ For the plays' Roman and Italian contexts, literary and historical, see Manuwald (2019) and Panayotakis (2019).

⁶¹ Gigante Lanzara notes that Menander prefers to stage good people, especially citizens, and to give positive views of human nature in his plays, rather than violence or aggression (1998). Plautus and Terence do not follow suit.

He then proceeds to identify conflict between generations in Roman comedy. Erja Salmenkivi considers family life as portrayed in Menander as a way to understand life in contemporary Athens (1997).⁶² David Konstan (1995) looks at how Menander examines social issues in Athens through his comedies; these social concerns include relationships between married couples as well as between the generations, but also relationships that involve non-citizen figures such as foreign *meretrices* (4).⁶³ Konstan's book on Roman comedy (1983) tackles social issues in a similar fashion. His analysis touches on values and concerns explored in the plays that are central to the Roman family and state.

Furthermore, studies of women are valuable resources for study of the family, such as Elaine Fantham's article (1975) on women of all statuses in Greek New Comedy, as well as her following work re-examining some of her earlier views (2004a, 2004c), and Cheryl Cox's work on women and particularly marriage in Menander (2002, 2012).⁶⁴ Dorota Dutsch works on female speech in Roman comedy (2008), and Anne Feltovich studies the social networks of women of various social statuses in Greek and Roman comedy, and the relationships between them, whether they are biologically related to each other or not (2011, 2015a, 2015b). James

⁶²Préaux, in contrast, reads Menander's comedies as "a mixture of reality and escape" ("un mélange de réalité et d'évasion") (100). The plays stage ideal situations and escapes from real life, but also situations that reveal the fears and anxieties of contemporary Athenians (1957).

⁶³Konstan also looks closely at premarital rape and illegitimate children in Menander (1994). See also Heap on the importance of babies in Menander's comedies: she argues that they are central characters in their own right (2003). Proffitt takes a step away from citizens in Menander, and explores the family situation of slaves in *Epitrepontes* (2011).

⁶⁴For more on women in Menander, see Rossich, who considers women of all statuses and emphasizes Menander's staging of various classes of women (1965). Henry considers women in Menander in light of their positive contribution to family and society (1987), and Bain reviews female speech in Menander, including how frequently they speak and which expressions are characteristic of women (1984). See also Brown on the figure of the *hetaira* in particular in New Comedy (1990, 247–258), Sommerstein on the *pallake* in Menander (2013), and Souto Delibes on the *hetaira* in all of Greek comedy (old, middle, and new) (2002).

(forthcoming) inevitably studies families in her work on women in New Comedy. Amanda Krauss (2004) draws conclusions about Roman marriage in Plautus' time and beyond through an analysis of the figure of the *matrona* in his plays. The 2015 collection of essays edited by Sharon James, David Konstan, and Dorota Dutsch gives various perspectives on comic women, including the concerns of citizen mothers (James), relationships between sisters of various statuses (Feltovich), and women in control, whether as wives or lovers (Fantham). Elisabeth Schuhmann has also studied women of various statuses in Plautus' comedies (1978, 1989).⁶⁵

Plautus' plays turn away from the citizen family, placing people of non-elite status at center stage—hence their relationships have been explored more in Plautine scholarship than in research on Terence or Menander (e.g., Richlin 2017). Conversely, the most important family connection to Terence is that between citizen fathers and sons, and thus that relationship is most explored in scholarship on Terence (Fantham 1971, 2004c; Lape 2004b, Johnson 1968), although overviews of the family that touch on other relationships have been produced as well (Packman 2013). Strobel studies women and female perspective in Terence, taking into account women of various statuses and their relationships with men (2004). Finally, because of the centrality of the family to the genre, studies on other topics that relate to family life, such as gender and sexuality (James 2013), or religion (Gellar-Goad 2013), are invaluable to the study of family in New Comedy.

⁶⁵See Packman, however, on the difficulties of determining women's statuses based on the role designations transmitted in manuscripts (1999). I do not follow Schuhmann's views of wives.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter Two, I analyze the ways Plautus critiques *patria potestas* through his depiction of citizen father-daughter relationships. He shows the most vulnerable member of the citizen family—the daughter—as a victim whose marriage and future security can be seriously harmed by her father’s misuse of his authority. He thus questions the validity of the system that places unlimited power in one man. In *Stichus*, for example, married daughters must defy their greedy *senex amator* father when he tries to force them to abandon their husbands, who are absent on business. In *Aulularia*, Euclio endangers his daughter’s marriage prospects by hoarding her dowry; in *Persa*, Saturio does the same by having his daughter masquerade as a captive sold to a pimp. In *Stichus* and *Persa*, the daughters articulate the difficult position in which *patria potestas*, and the obligation to obey their father’s authority, places them. In *Trinummus*, by contrast, Plautus dramatizes the way male relatives and neighbors step up to protect a daughter at risk of marriage without a dowry, staging numerous conversations about the way she deserves a decent marriage, in which she can be secure. These scenes contrast sharply with the attitudes of the fathers in the other three plays.

Terence critiques *patria potestas* similarly by showing its deleterious effect on vulnerable family members (James 2013), but his plays do not center on fathers and daughters as much as Plautus’ do, and I discuss them only briefly in this dissertation. I also do not discuss the father-son relationship, although in both Plautus’ and Terence’s dramas, the father’s unbridled power damages this relationship as well. I give a brief summary and my reasoning here. In Plautus’ plays, the *senex amator* is usually the problematic father. Acting inappropriately for his age, he becomes his son’s sexual rival, wasting family resources and hurting his wife and children in the process (e.g., *Asinaria*, *Casina*). Terence, in turn, criticizes paternal autonomy by staging fathers

who are strict and cruel, or lenient to a fault, as well as conflict between these types (e.g., *Adelphoe*, *HT*). Terence's intense focus on the struggles faced by citizen fathers who have sons demonstrates the unreasonable pressure *patria potestas* places on a parent in this position.

The relationship of citizen fathers and daughters, however, has the greatest power imbalance within the family and, thus, greater potential for harm through misuse of *patria potestas*. This dynamic is also less studied in scholarship than the relationship between fathers and sons, and provides a fruitful comparison with my third chapter about displaced citizen daughters and their mother-figures. A critique of *patria potestas* applies for most fathers in Roman comedy, regardless of the gender of their children.

In Chapter Three, I examine my first alternate family model: households led by non-citizen and underprivileged women. I focus on three *meretrices* who become adoptive guardians of respectable young women (Chrysis in *Andria*, Thais in *Eunuchus*, and Melaenis in *Cistellaria*). These female caregivers lack social connections, civic status, and financial resources, and they are not related by blood to their charges. Yet they do their utmost to protect and secure the future of the young women in their care, even taking over the role of the *paterfamilias* in arranging their marriages. I also briefly discuss single and disadvantaged mothers and *meretrices* who take similar responsibility for their daughters in *Asinaria*, *Truculentus*, *Adelphoe*, *Epidicus*, and *Phormio*. Overall, Plautus and Terence show these underprivileged women as better guardians than citizen men, despite their relative social and economic powerlessness. By staging the positive qualities of female-led families, Plautus and Terence not only criticize the arbitrary authority of citizen males, but even the primacy of citizens and the citizen family itself, so often taken for granted in their genre and in the ancient world.

In Chapter Four, I turn to an unlikely and previously unnoticed family form, consisting of Plautine soldiers and *meretrices* with whom they seek long-term, marriage-like relationships. Although the soldier in Roman comedy is almost always uncouth, absurd, and violent, Plautus stages some soldiers who care deeply about an exclusive relationship with a specific girl. In *Epidicus*, a Rhodian soldier wants a long-term relationship with one individual girl and will not settle for a different one. In *Truculentus*, a Babylonian soldier considers a *meretrix* to be his wife and wants to raise a child with her. In *Miles Gloriosus* and *Bacchides*, the idea of a soldier having a wife is presented as unremarkable. Moreover, in each play, the willingness and desire of the soldiers for marriage and family contrasts strongly with the citizen men's lack of interest in marriage, lack of marriage prospects, and inappropriate behavior for their age.

The foreignness of these soldiers and the *infamis* status of the women they pursue would make their marriages non-legal (*iniustum coniugium*, in the term of Phang 2001), but Plautus stages these relationships with no concern for civic legitimacy. These unions would have been especially meaningful in the wartime context of the 200s BCE, as his audience would have included Roman veterans seeking to start families, after a long term of military service, who might have seen themselves in these marriage-minded soldiers. At the same time, the audience also might have included soldiers on leave from campaign, non-citizens (even non-citizen soldiers), and *meretrices*, all of whom could not pursue legal marriage but would have seen their relationships reflected on a public stage regardless.

Finally, I offer a conclusion about the implications of Plautus' and Terence's expansive portrayal of family in their genre and its effects on young women. These playwrights' depiction of families of choice, both adoptive and marital, would have resonated with non-citizen members of the audience as they saw relationships like their own on a public stage. At the same time, by

focusing on young women, both the most vulnerable and the most cherished members of the citizen family, and showing what can happen to them, Plautus and Terence stage a powerful critique of the effects of *patria potestas*.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PERILS OF *POTESTAS*: THE FATHER'S AUTHORITY AND THE DAUGHTER AT RISK

The father-daughter relationship in Roman comedy has been studied much less than the father-son relationship. This disparity is unsurprising, as fathers and sons are central to a great deal of the staged conflict in the genre. Plautus and Terence use this relationship as a tool to criticize *patria potestas* and its effects on the family, as they show both fathers and sons harmed by paternal authority. In Terence's drama, this harm takes the form of struggle and stress felt by both parent and child because of extreme methods of parenting (*Adelphoe*, *Andria*, *HT*).¹ Plautus features the toll of a *senex amator*'s unbridled appetites on the son and, sometimes, the father as well (*Asinaria*, *Casina*).² Although the father-son relationship is primary in both Roman social history and Roman comedy, the genre offers opportunity, so far mostly overlooked, to take stock

¹ For the father-son relationship in Terence, see, e.g., Fantham (1971, 2004b), Lape (2004b). Terence's depiction of fathers and sons are often discussed vis-à-vis *Adelphoe*, e.g., Johnson (1968), Traill (2013), Gratwick (1999), Martin (1976).

² For an overview of fathers and sons in Plautus, see, e.g., Maurice (2007, 148–59), Paduano (1995), Sherberg (1995), Baier (2007), Petrone (2012), and Bianco (2003, 115–38). For the *senex amator* in particular, see Ryder (1984).

of the effect of *patria potestas* on the most vulnerable member of the citizen family: the citizen daughter.³

In this chapter, I discuss four plays by Plautus that stage the influence of the father—and, at times, other male relatives—on his daughter’s life and, most prominently, on her marriage,⁴ and I follow up with a short review of Terence’s treatment of this issue. The effect of these men’s power is significant and can be quite damaging. *Potestas* gives a man full control over his daughter’s marriage and dowry, so a greedy, corrupt, or uncaring father can endanger a girl’s future security or seriously damage her marriage prospects. It is worth noting that a defective father never endangers a son in Plautine comedy. He might upset the boy, and interfere with his access to a girlfriend (eg., *Asinaria*, *Mercator*, *Pseudolus*) or his dedication to an unmarriageable girl (e.g., *Cistellaria*; *Andria*, *HT*), but he does not put his son in danger.⁵ Furthermore, unlike sons, who will eventually become *patresfamilia* in their own right, Roman daughters would have been affected for the rest of their lives by the power of their father, their husband, or a *tutor*.⁶ *Patria potestas* had even more potential for harm, if such a claim can be made, where daughters were concerned.

³ For the vulnerability of the citizen daughter in Roman comedy, see James (2015).

⁴ Coincidentally or not, three of these four plays are relatively understudied.

⁵ As noted above, Terence shows various risks to sons because of paternal intransigence and practices of fatherhood, which are staged themes in at least half of his plays. Those risks, however, are chiefly emotional and developmental, though it could be argued that Clinia of *HT* might be endangered by military service when he runs away from his father’s nagging. His swift return home, however, marks him as physically safe.

⁶ Whose *potestas* these women were under depended on the type of marriage they had and their living male relatives. See Ch. 1 (for a brief discussion), Treggiari (1991, 16–36), Hersch (2010, 23–27).

The chronology of Plautus' plays about daughters is potentially significant. Arguments about Plautus' chronology are questionable, as it is probable that not all of his plays are extant, and the ones that do remain are often conjecturally dated. The points about fathers and daughters outlined below, however, do not rely on chronology to be persuasive but are interesting when considered in light of it. Plautus first stages the father-daughter dynamic in *Stichus*. Dating is more certain for this play than most, as a stage record transmitted with the play notes that it was first staged at the Plebeian Games in 200 BCE.⁷ Next comes *Persa*, likely staged after 191 BCE.⁸ In both plays, Plautus shows daughters who make sophisticated moral arguments about *patria potestas* and its negative effects on their marriages. Shortly after *Persa*, around 190 BCE, *Aulularia* was likely first staged.⁹ In both *Persa* and *Aulularia*, Plautus shows an unmarried citizen daughter whose marriage prospects are put at extreme risk by her father's greed and negligence. In *Persa*, the daughter herself articulates this risk at length; in *Aulularia*, an elderly suitor for the daughter loudly seeks an impoverished wife whom he can control—an ominous depiction of an unhappy life for her. Plautus' last word on the subject comes in *Trinummus*, around 188–187 BCE.¹⁰ In this play, he pulls no punches. Much of the play's dialogue consists

⁷ De Melo (2013, 2); Schutter (1952, 135–40). For a list of all Plautus' plays and their dates, see Fontaine (2014, 517). For the political context of *Stichus*, see Owens (2000, esp. 385–91, 402–405).

⁸ De Melo (2011c, 448). Schutter thinks *Persa* was likely staged between 196–191, but probably closer to 196 (1952, 113–18).

⁹ The dating of this play is very conjectural, with a *terminus post quem* of 195 and a *terminus ante quem* of 186. 190 is De Melo's safe guess (2011a, 251–52). See also Schutter, who dates the play to 194 (1952, 21–29).

¹⁰ Most scholars date *Trinummus* to 188–187 BCE: De Melo (2013, 115–16), Schutter (1952, 141–48), Fontaine (2014, 517). Slater argues that the play should be dated earlier, in 192 BCE (1987, esp. 267), an opinion picked up by Papaioannou (2016, 176). I find Slater's reasoning faulty on two grounds. He argues that for a reference to *Curculio* in *Trinummus* to make sense, the plays must have been staged within a year of each other, as was common in Aristophanes' plays. But Aristophanes' plays were deliberately topical and current to a degree that Plautus' were not. Further, in *Bacchides*, Chrysalus mentions *Epidicus* (214). These two plays are dated roughly six years apart: De Melo (2011a, 360; 2011b, 322), Fontaine (2014, 517), Schutter (1952, 30–38, 69–76). So there is no need to date *Trinummus* earlier to match up

of men openly, even obsessively, conversing about the importance of ensuring a citizen daughter's security and happiness in marriage. Strikingly, Plautus' final say on the subject is not a comic critique, but a persistent, direct articulation of the care and concern with which citizen men should treat unmarried daughters.¹¹

Before discussing the defective fathers and the daughters at risk, I begin, briefly, with *Trinummus*, as it lays out the appropriate social attitudes toward the citizen daughter.¹² In this play, the unrelated male neighbors of an unmarried citizen daughter spend a great deal of time discussing her dowry and its critical role in securing her a good marriage.¹³ Her brother Lesbonicus has squandered the family's money for some years. Alarmed at this financial wreckage and the risk it poses to his daughter, their father Charmides entrusts an enormous

with *Curculio*. Second, part of Slater's argument is based on a speech in *Curculio* that he argues is evoked in *Trinummus* because "the threat to *mores* in the *Trinummus* is at bottom *luxuria*, as the allegorical prologue figures *Luxuria* and *Inopia* (1-22) make clear" (268). But this comment cannot be used as an argument for dating, as *luxuria* is not the theme of *Trinummus*, and as many scholars have argued, Plautus does not care about the threat to *mores*. See fn. 12 below for a list and discussion of scholars who do not take morality in the *Trinummus* seriously. Although I do not agree with Slater's argument, I note that even if he is correct, my points about fathers and daughters in Plautus still stand, but without the chronological thrust for which I argue.

¹¹ As Petrone notes, *Trinummus* is about important conflicts and key points in the Roman world (2016, 15); I argue that concern about the citizen daughter is one such key point.

¹² Anderson disagrees with this interpretation and finds the morality of *Trinummus* absurd throughout (1979). In his view, the play has "reduced marriage to a poor joke" (340), and Plautus purposely bores his audience with moral discussions to show their futility (344-45); Sharrock disagrees (2014, 170). Stein (1970) also views morality as a failure in *Trinummus*; see Lefèvre (1993) for a conclusion that the play would have been highly exciting for its time (188), as well as for its discussions of morality and its political context, on which see also Segal (1974). Papaioannou discusses morality (2016, 169-71) and supplies a concise overview of scholarly reactions to *Trinummus*, with sources (2016, 169); Petrone (2016, 15n.2) does likewise. Perhaps the play's preoccupation with morality is why Cicero cites *Trinummus* more than any other of Plautus' plays: Petrone (2016, citing Malcovati [1944, 153]).

¹³ Karakasis discusses the importance of the dowry in this play (2003, 206-207), as well as how *patria potestas* features, but regarding the sons in the play rather than the daughter (200-206); Petrone also notes the importance of the father-son relationship in *Trinummus*, without mentioning the daughter (2016, 19n.9). Papaioannou discusses the thematic similarity of *Aulularia* and *Trinummus*, as found in the extensive discussions of dowry in both plays (2016, 178-80). As she remarks, Lesbonicus' points in *Trinummus* describe the social necessity of the dowry that Megadorus does not acknowledge.

dowry to his friend Callicles, and goes off to make more money. In his absence, Lesbonicus runs through the family's remaining funds, even going so far as to sell his father's house (to Callicles, who buys it out of loyalty to Charmides). When he realizes that he has nothing left for his sister's dowry, Lesbonicus panics and decides to sell the family farm, over strong protests by his family's enslaved worker Stasimus. Callicles enlists neighboring *senes* to pull off a trick that will provide the girl's dowry safely (i.e., without letting it fall into her brother's hands), not knowing that Lesbonicus has belatedly developed a conscience about her. The *adulescens* Lysiteles seeks to marry her without a dowry, but Lesbonicus refuses, on the grounds that such a match would be a disgrace. Throughout, he and the *senes* discuss, in separate scenes, how dreadful it would be for this girl to be married without a dowry, as they struggle and plot to provide the cash. Charmides returns home in time to approve the marriage, bestow a dowry, and see his scapegrace son agree to grow up and take a wife.

Much of *Trinummus* is dedicated to discussions of morality, but a striking amount of the action focuses on concern that the unnamed daughter be placed into a secure marriage, with a husband who respects her. This concern is depicted as widespread: although they are not her kin, the busy-body *senes* pontificate about her future marriage as a generally recognized social concern. I return to a specific analysis of *Trinummus* later in this chapter, but I place this plot description here because it demonstrates the way the defective fathers of *Stichus*, *Persa*, and *Aulularia* should behave—but do not.

The Business of Fatherhood: Antipho of *Stichus*

Plautus' *Stichus*, first staged around 200 BCE, features his earliest comment on the father-daughter relationship.¹⁴ In this play, two married sisters are waiting for their husbands, who have been away on business for three years, to return. Their father, Antipho, wants them to remarry, but they resist. Luckily, their husbands soon return home wealthy. In the next section of the play, Antipho tries to convince his son-in-law Epignomus to give him at least one of the girls they have brought back for sexual trafficking. Epignomus first resists, but eventually complies (at least jokingly). The final scene of the play is a banquet between Epignomus' enslaved worker Stichus, who has the day off; his friend Sangarinus, enslaved by Pamphilippus; and their girlfriend, the *ancilla* Stephanium, also enslaved by Pamphilippus.¹⁵

Antipho is a source of trouble for Pamphila and Panegyris because it is within his *potestas* to force them to leave their husbands, but in the end, he does not succeed. In order to stay married, his daughters use sophistic arguments about his authority against him.¹⁶ They have no legal power to decide for themselves what is in their best interest, so they must work within the bounds of *patria potestas* to get what they want. The conflict between father and daughters at the opening of the play shows that the scope of *potestas* causes tension even for married women,

¹⁴ Stichus was likely a popular play, as it was repeated three times: Livy 31.50.3, de Melo (2013, 3). For reasoning on why the play was popular, see Wagenvoort (1931, 311–12), de Melo (2013, 9–10), Owens (2000).

¹⁵ Modern scholars have been confused about how the three pieces of the play fit together: de Melo (2013, 3), Owens (2000, with sources). Vázquez address this issue, arguing that the play was concerned more with humor than cohesive plot (2016), as does Papoiannou, arguing for the play's experimental nature (2016, 185–98).

¹⁶ For an analysis of the daughters' rhetorical strategy in this conversation, see Krauss (2008, 29–35). She analyzes the scene in light of *patria potestas*, showing it as critical of Antipho and as an important example of daughterly *pietas* (37–39). For an analysis of this interaction that takes into account gesture, see Raccanelli (2020). For more on the character of the two sisters, see Cardoso (2001), who also attempts to find unity in the play's plot. Petrone (1977, 36–44; 2015, 38) Owens (2000, 391–94), and Arnott (1972, 57–61) discuss the moral language in the conversation between father and daughters.

and that they have to work to evade it. Pamphila in particular is worried about their duty (7, *officium*) to their husbands, and is upset about her father's demands on them to remarry (11–17).¹⁷

... sed hoc, soror, crucior
patrem tuom meumque adeo, unice qui unus
ciuibus ex omnibus probus perhibetur,
eum nunc improbi uiri officio uti
uiris qui tantas apsentibus nostris 15
facit iniurias immerito
nosque ab eis abducere uolt.

But I am in pain from this, sister, that your father and mine, who is the one man, alone, called “righteous” out of all the citizens, now he performs the duty of an unrighteous man, who commits such great insults against our absent husbands’ honor, undeservedly, and wants to take us away from them.

The struggle these women face arises from the *potestas* their father retains over them even after marriage.¹⁸ Pamphila feels strongly that they should honor their father in accordance with his role and authority. As the sisters continue to discuss their situation, Panegyris’ alliteration and etymological wordplay emphasize their father’s power: “We need to endure his actions, since his power is more powerful” (68–69, *pati / nos oportet quod ille faciat, quouis potestas plus potest*). A possibly spurious piece of dialogue relates the daughters’ concern explicitly to their father’s

¹⁷ Uniquely, this play begins with a canticum sung by two young wives: Raffaelli (2015, 9), Moore (1998b, 259). All translations are my own. Panegyris compares their waiting for their husbands to Penelope’s (1–6), but is overall more upset with their absent husbands than Pamphila is: she complains about having to worry about their husbands’ business while they are gone (5–6), and is irritated that their husbands have not returned or sent word during their absence (31–33). She thinks their *officium* to their husbands should be reciprocated (34–35).

¹⁸ Pamphila and Panegyris must have been married *sine manu* and thus remain under their father’s *potestas*. Otherwise, he would not have the power to force them to leave their husbands (Treggiari 1991, 34).

potestas: “It rests in the power of our father: we must do what our parents order” (53–54, *in patris potestate est situm: / faciendum id nobis quod parentes imperant*).¹⁹

If they were *sui iuris*, these women could have remained married to their husbands for as long as they chose, but, as it stands, their reputations will suffer if they defy their father. As Panegyris puts it: “I think we should make this effort by entreating, not by opposing him ... we cannot oppose him without the greatest disgrace and wickedness” (70–72, *exorando, haud aduorsando sumendam operam censeo / ... aduorsari sine dedecore et scelere summo hau possumus*). Arguing against their father would be a violation of their duty to him. Like her father, she is outward-directed; Pamphila, too, cares about public opinion (113–14).²⁰

The simple fact of Antipho’s *potestas* gives his daughters little leeway to maneuver. They win, for now, by turning his authority against him. He cites his friends as “my authority on this point: that I should lead you home from here” (128, *mi auctores ita sunt amici, ut uos hinc abducam domum*). He uses the word *auctores* to mean “advisors,”²¹ but the word has specific resonance in a marital context, as an *auctor* can also be a witness of a marriage contract, whether a parent, guardian, brother, or relative.²² The word is associated with fathers, lawmakers, and authority figures both within the family and in general. Ironically, Antipho is appealing to the

¹⁹ Lindsay brackets lines 48–57 in *Stichus* (1905), which are not found in *A*. Even if these lines are not considered genuine, their addition spells out the values at stake in the sisters’ conversation.

²⁰ Antipho might use another facet of his power to his advantage: that it lasts for the duration of his lifetime. “Should I endure that you are married to beggar husbands while I am alive?” (132, *uosne ego patiar cum mendicis nuptas me vivo viris?*). On the other hand, *me vivo* does not need to have this legal resonance. Further, Antipho does want to fight with them (75–83), although he does want to frighten them out of their marriages (85, *perpauefaciam pectora*), and affection between the daughters and their father is staged when they greet him with kisses and make sure he is sitting comfortably (90–98).

²¹ *OLD* s.v. *auctor* 5–6. Antipho invokes his “advisors” here to avoid taking responsibility, just as he invents a *senex* like himself later to convince Epignomus to give him a *fidicina* (discussed below).

²² *OLD* s.v. *auctor* 3b.

authority of *auctores* to reverse a marriage (128, *abducam*). The verb *abducere* denotes the opposite of marriage, which is commonly expressed as *ducere uxorem*.²³ Pamphila points out this contradiction more clearly herself (129–31):

at enim nos quarum res agitur aliter auctores sumus.
nam aut olim, nisi tibi placebant, non datas oportuit
aut nunc non aequom est abduci, pater, illisce apsentibus.

But indeed we, whose circumstances are being affected, are authorities in a different way. For either it was not fitting that we be given to those men then, unless they pleased you, or it is not right that we be taken away now, father, while they are absent.

She emphatically refers to herself and her sister as *auctores* of their own situation, countering Antipho's use in the preceding line. Cleverly, she casts them as appealing directly to his authority, arguing that the original marriage he arranged for them should be honored.

Panegyris uses the same strategy when Antipho makes a final appeal: "Is it certain that neither of you will obey the command of your father?" (141, *certumne, est neutrum uostrarum persequi imperium patris?*). She responds, "We are obeying, because we do not want to leave the marriage that you gave us" (142, *persequimur, nam quo dedisti nuptum abire nolumus*). To oppose her father's current will, she brings to bear his past commands, picking up his wording. This rhetorical move could succeed only in a situation where a father still has as much control over his children during their adult lives, since they have not married out of the family. The daughters' conversations with each other, and with their father, showcase the problems for women caused by the longevity and power of a father's authority even after marriage.

Paternal authority might often have been helpful for a woman in a new marriage. In *Trinummus*, as discussed below, the dowry represents the natal family's interest in the marriage

²³ The verb is also used elsewhere to describe Antipho's breaking up his daughters' marriages at (17, 131). Epignomus uses the same verb to tell Stichus to bring the captive women home (418, 435); in the same context, he uses *adducere* (418). Stichus uses *duco* to mean "hire" (426, *ducam hodie amicam*).

and lessens risk for the citizen daughter. In *Menaechmi*, Matrona's father intercedes in her marriage on her behalf (753–852). Although he comically assumes the worst about his daughter's conduct, he does come to her aid when she needs him. He also implies that this sort of paternal intervention is typical, remarking that daughters generally call on their fathers "in case of offense or argument" (772, *commissi aut iurgi est causa*).

In *Stichus*, Antipho does not intervene because his daughters want him to: the prospect brings Pamphila to tears (11–19) and Panegyris, although less concerned, still hopes that he will "act better" (22, *melius facturum*) than to ask them to leave their husbands. Instead, he views marriage from a materialistic standpoint, and is concerned about appearances, as he is worried about the financial status of his sons-in-law, whom he calls "beggar husbands" (133, *mendicis ... uiris*) and "robbers" (135, *latrones*). Pamphila notes in response that financial gain is not necessarily the purpose of a marriage: "You didn't give me to money in marriage, I think, but to a husband" (136, *non tu me argento dedisti, opinor, nuptum, sed uiro*). It is possible that the father-daughter conflict in *Stichus* would have resonated with Plautus' audience, as the play was staged at the beginning of the Second Macedonian War and shortly after the Second Punic War (Richlin 2017, 489–90). Perhaps fathers had recently faced, or were about to face, the prospect of telling daughters whose husbands had been missing in war for years that it was time to remarry and move on. But again, these are not Antipho's motives, and his daughters' husbands are about to return.²⁴

The extent of Antipho's misconception of marriage is fully articulated in his conversations with his sons-in-law when they return. They each come back with human cargo: shiploads of luxury goods including slave-women musicians to be sold on into the flesh trade.

²⁴ Antipho's concern with finances might also point to self-interest: if he can remarry his daughters to wealthy men, he will not have to support them if their impoverished husbands never return.

Antipho wants Epignomus to give him girls for free, but as seen in the opening discussion with his daughters, thinks he can win his point by going at it sideways (he does not learn from experience). He makes up a story about an old man with two sons-in-law, who wants the same thing he does (539–41):

fuit olim, quasi ego sum, senex; ei filiae
duae erant, quasi nunc meae sunt; eae erant duobus nuptae fratribus,
quasi nunc meae sunt uobis.

Once there was an old man, just like me; he had two daughters, like I do now;
they were married to two brothers, just like now you are to my daughters.

Antipho's pretense provides for a great deal of comedy in the ensuing conversation with Epignomus, who plays along, so the old man cranks up his ask to four girls.²⁵ But the joke is also a way of distancing himself from behavior he knows is immoral and unsuitable for his age.²⁶ Epignomus and Pamphilippus also know that Antipho's request is sleazy, especially for an old man (571–73):

EPI: etiam nunc scelestus sese ducit pro adolescentulo.
dabitur homini amica, noctu quae in lecto occentet senem.
PAM: namque edepol aliud quidem illi quid amica opus sit nescio.

EPI: Even now, that wicked guy takes himself for a teenager. I'll give the guy a girlfriend—so she can serenade the old man in bed at night!
PAM: Yeah, geeze, I really don't know what other use he would have for a girlfriend.

Pamphilippus' joke about Antipho's ability to have sex at his age, and Epignomus' sarcastic use of the diminutive *adulescentulo*, balanced by *senem* at the end of the next line, mark Antipho's

²⁵ For analysis of their dialogue as a meta-drama, see Papaioannou (2016, 196).

²⁶ His story about a “friend” is the equivalent of the modern American expression “asking for a friend,” a joking phrase appended to a request that is embarrassing for the speaker. The joke relies on both parties' knowing that the “friend” is actually the speaker the whole time.

absurdity.²⁷ In reality, he is far from the *adulescens* of New Comedy whose preoccupation with *meretrices* could be excused as proper to a man too young for marriage.²⁸ Most notably, though, Antipho phrases his request for a young woman as a request for a wife. He says to Epignomus: “I gave you my daughter gladly, to lie with: now I think it’s proper that you return the favor and I lie with someone from you” (547–48, *ego tibi meam filiam bene quicum cubitares dedi: / nunc mihi reddi ego aequom esse aps te quicum cubitem censeo*). Antipho presents the argument logically, but there is no situation in the Greek or Roman world in which a father would be entitled to a sexual partner in return for giving his daughter in marriage. The ludicrous request shows Antipho’s inappropriate sexual appetite.

Antipho also asks for feed and upkeep for the young women (554, *quod edint*) on behalf of the *senex* in his story. The cost of maintenance is a common complaint of stingy comic slave owners going back to Herodas, as Antipho himself demonstrates (58–61, Richlin 2017, 295); what is strange is that he refers to this money as a dowry (560). Epignomus draws the line here (561–62):

ANT: hercle qui aequom postulabat ill’ senex, quando quidem
 filiae illae dederat dotem, accipere pro tibicina. 560
 EPI: hercle illequidem certo adulescens docte uorsutus fuit,
 qui seni illi concubinam dare dotatam noluit.

ANT: Really, the old man was asking for something proper—to receive a dowry for the flute girl—since indeed he had given one to his daughter!”

²⁷ The verb *occentet* (572) might also play into the critique of Antipho’s behavior. It is rare, and used mostly by Plautus, who uses it to refer to obnoxious serenading outside a door (*Curculio* 145, *Persa* 569, *Mercator* 408; see Richlin 2017: 178–81). Even Antipho’s *amica* is bound to mock her new *vir*.

²⁸ Indeed, in his fictitious story, Antipho refers to the much younger Epignomus as an *adulescens* (542, 550, 557, 565). He knows he does not belong to this category. But Epignomus has been married for some years, so the term is inappropriate for him as well. An attentive viewer might notice this anomaly, especially in the context of a debate about appropriate behavior for *adulescentes* and *senes*. In fact, no one in the play is an *adulescens*, although it is notable that Antipho’s name is only elsewhere used for an *adulescens* in Roman comedy (e.g., Antipho in *Phormio*), perhaps pointing up the *senex*’s immaturity.

EPI: Really, that young man was certainly clever and shrewd, since he didn't want to give the old man a dowered concubine!

A *concupina dotata* is a contradiction in terms.²⁹ By asking for girls and support for them, in exchange for his daughter and her dowry, Antipho misuses the language of citizen marriage, applying it to an old man looking for an enslaved young woman to have sex with, without having to pay to feed her. This abuse of marital language undercuts his role as an authority over marriage, a status automatically granted to him as *paterfamilias* and underscored when he tried to remarry his daughters at the beginning of the play.³⁰

In his conversations with both Epignomus and his daughters, Antipho reveals that he views marriage as transactional and as existing chiefly for his own benefit: he thinks he should get concubines and dowry in return for his daughters, just as he thinks his daughters are commodities he can place well in the marriage market. He takes a similarly problematic view of friendship when he greets Pamphilippus at his return. Pamphilippus wants his father-in-law to be his “friend” (508–10, *amicum*). Antipho responds (518–22):

quando ita rem gessistis ut uos uelle amicosque addecet,
pax commerxque est uobis mecum. nam hoc tu facito ut cogites:
ut quoique homini res parata est, perinde amicis utitur: 520
si res firma, <item> firmi amici sunt; sin res laxe labat,
itidem amici collabascunt: res amicos inuenit.

Since you accomplished your business as you and your friends should want, there is peace and commerce toward you both where I'm concerned. Make sure you think like this: as a man gains property, so he enjoys friends: if his property is stable, likewise his friends are stable; but if his property slips away through negligence, just the same his friends begin to slip away: property finds friends.

²⁹ Petrone notes that Antipho here confuses concubine and wife, thus violating the importance of the dowry, as seen in *Aulularia* and *Trinummus* (2015, 45). She further points out that the oxymoron he uses here is a reversal of the marriage theme discussed earlier (46). See also Richlin (forthcoming, 31) on his behavior in this scene.

³⁰ For Antipho's perverse use of moral language in this play, especially the word *aequom*, see Petrone (1977, 36–51); Owens discusses the use of this word in a political context (2000, 403, 403n.41).

To Antipho, possessions buy friendship. As long as his sons-in-law come back rich, he is on friendly terms with them. On his return, Epignomus has a similar interaction with Antipho, as he narrates (408–14):

nam iam Antiphonem conueni affinem meum
cumque eo reueni ex inimicitia in gratiam.
uidete, quaeso, quid potest pecunia: 410
quoniam bene gesta re rediisse me uidet
magnasque apportauisse diuitias domum,
sine aduocatis ibidem in cercuro in stega
in amicitiam atque in gratiam conuortimus.

I've already met my father-in-law Antipho and I've come back from hostility to favor where he's concerned. Please, see the power of money: since he sees that I've done well and I've brought home great wealth, right away, without counselors, on the deck of the ship, we have come back into friendship and favor.

This definition of a friendship as dependent on money and resources is common in Roman comedy—but in the context of commercial sex, not of the nuclear family.³¹

In *Stichus*, Plautus stages a materialistic *senex amator* whose *patria potestas* is badly used. Although he is the legal authority over his daughter's marriages, his actions throughout the play show that he understands marriage as a purely financial liaison similar to commercial sex. His daughters take a different view of their unions, but because of Antipho's power, they must allow him the final say over their marriages, no matter their own desires. The people in this play who take citizen marriage dutifully (the daughters) do not have authority over it, while the person who takes marriage as a business (the father) wields it all. With this contradiction, Plautus criticizes the system in which a *paterfamilias* has unquestioned legal authority despite his

³¹ In fact, the word is used to refer to Stephanium and the men who pay her for sex in the third section of the play, when repetition and wordplay call attention to Stichus and Sangarinus as her *amici*, and her as their *amica*. In light of this final act of the play, Antipho's attitude to his own daughters can be seen as a form of *lenocinium*. In his estimation, a daughter requires money to stay with a man; if she is not benefiting financially, she must find another husband, as a *leno* or *lena* would urge a *meretrix* to find a new customer. Likewise, in reverse, he uses the language of citizen marriage to describe a sexual relationship with an enslaved concubine.

manifest inability to use it appropriately where his daughters are concerned. The playwright makes the same critique in *Persa*.

The Negligent Father: Saturio of *Persa*

In *Persa*, Plautus makes the connection between *leno* and *paterfamilias* explicit. In this play, a parasite, Saturio, is convinced by the enslaved trickster Toxilus to swindle the pimp Dordalus.³² Toxilus' plan involves Saturio's daughter, an unnamed *virgo*, usually denominated as Virgo. She pretends to be a captive freeborn Persian and helps Toxilus convince the pimp to buy her informally, without mancipation. Once he does, Saturio shows up and claims she is a free citizen. Because of the informal sale, Dordalus has no legal recourse post-purchase and loses his money.

Toxilus' goal is to trick Dordalus out of enough money to pay back his friend Sagaristio, also enslaved, the amount required for the pimp to manumit Toxilus' girlfriend, Lemniselenis, enslaved by Dordalus. The plan depends on Virgo's active participation and her father's consent, topics discussed in two scenes: one between Toxilus and Saturio, and one between Saturio and his daughter. The marked differences in these scenes point to the different character, morality, and family values of Saturio and Virgo. He takes very little convincing to agree to what is in effect a scheme to prostitute his daughter. The promise of food is enough for him. Ironically, on his first entrance he makes a speech about his family tradition of being a parasite, expanding on his family tree and comically glamorizing his roots (53–61):

ueterem atque antiquom quaestum maio<rum meum>
seruo atque optineo et magna cum cura colo.

³² Saturio is the only parasite in Roman comedy to have a family: Richlin (2017, 260), Hardy (2005, 25).

nam numquam quisquam meorum maiorum fuit 55
 quin parasitando pauerint uentris suos:
 pater, auos, proauos, abauos, atauos, tritauos
 quasi mures semper edere alienum cibum,
 neque edacitate eos quisquam poterat uincere,
 atque is cognomentum erat uiris Capitonibus, 60
 unde ego hunc quaestum optineo et maiorum locum.

I preserve and maintain and cultivate with great care the aged and ancient occupation of my ancestors. For never was there any one of my ancestors who did not nourish his stomach by being a parasite: my father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, great-great-great grandfather, and great-great-great-great grandfather, just like mice, always ate food that belonged to others, and no one could conquer them in ravenousness. And these men had the surname Mullets. From them I have obtained this occupation and the position of my ancestors.

This introduction to Saturio's family line is comic, but the joke is based on real upper-class reverence for ancestors, agnatic family lines, and the *mores maiorum*. Although he is joking, Saturio presents himself as taking pride in his family and ancestry. Yet, as his later conversation with his daughter shows, his concern for the family line does not stretch to any desire for securing its future, as he is cavalier about her marriage prospects, ready to endanger them, and even open to losing his daughter altogether.

When Toxilus initially presents the plan to Saturio, the fact that Toxilus is effectively asking Saturio to prostitute his daughter so that both men can benefit financially is apparent straightaway (127–30):

TOX: iam nolo argentum: filiam utendam tuam
 mihi da.
 SAT: numquam edepol quoiquam etiam utendam dedi.
 TOX: non ad istuc quod tu insimulas.
 SAT: quid eam uis?
 TOX: scies.
 quia forma lepida et liberali est.

TOX: I don't want money now: lend me your daughter.
 SAT: I've never lent her to anyone before.
 TOX: It's not for what you suspect.

SAT: Why do you want her?

TOX: You'll find out. Because she has a shape that's charming and freeborn-looking.

Saturio instantly assumes that giving his daughter to Toxilus on loan would be prostituting her; Toxilus clarifies that he is not implying prostitution. Although Saturio seems to have caught on immediately to what loaning out his daughter for money implies, his only hesitation is not with the act itself, but that he has not done it yet (*etiam*). A few lines later, Toxilus asserts that he wants to sell the girl (*illam uendere*, 134). Saturio has no complaint about how his daughter will be treated: he is merely worried about the status of the leftovers that Toxilus has promised him (138–39). When Toxilus makes clear that Saturio will not eat if he does not allow Toxilus the use of his daughter, Saturio replies enthusiastically: “By god, I’m asking you even to sell me too, if you want, as long as you sell me when I’m full” (145–46, *quaeso hercle me quoque etiam uende, si lubet, dum saturum uendas*). Even when Saturio assumed at the beginning of the conversation that he was being asked to prostitute his daughter, he barely hesitated. His minor hesitation evaporated as soon as he realized that his participation would allow him to eat.

As his daughter points out, however, this plan puts her at serious risk because it poses damage to her reputation and marriage prospects: “But watch out that when you want to marry me off, this reputation does not cause a divorceful marriage” (383–85, *uerum uideto, me ubi uoles nuptum dare, / ne haec fama faciat repudiosas nuptias*).³³ She is also afraid at the prospect of being sold to the pimp, even though her father asserts she has nothing to fear (364). She immediately grasps that he is treating her as property to be used for his own support rather than as a daughter (336–38):

³³ Virgo mentions the danger to her reputation also at 358–59. Many scholars have studied the character and speech of Virgo in this play. See, e.g., Richlin (2017, 116–17, 260–65); Hardy (2005), Manuwald (2001), Sherberg (2001), Marshall (1997), Lowe (1989), Fontaine (2011), González Vázquez (2014).

amabo, mi pater,
quamquam lubenter escis alienis studes,
tuin uentris causa filiam uendas tuam?

Please, father,
however much you enjoy pursuing other people's food,
would you sell your daughter for the sake of your stomach?

She follows up by asking, "Do you consider me as a slave girl or as a daughter?" (341, *utrum pro ancilla me habes an pro filia?*), to which he replies, "The one, by God, that seems more profitable for my stomach. I think I have command over you, not you over me" (342–43, *utrum hercle magis in uentris rem uidebitur. meum, opino, imperium est in te, non in me tibi[st]*).

Saturio's response answers his daughter's question. His concern for personal gain, such as he could accomplish by pimping, or by selling an enslaved girl, implies that he considers her *pro ancilla*. Regarding his daughter *pro filia*³⁴ would entail the opposite, as the Roman father is responsible for financial outlay, i.e., providing his daughter with a dowry.

Indeed, father and daughter go on to discuss her dowry. Saturio points out that a girl's reputation matters less than her dowry: "Here, it's easy to get married with a reputation of any sort. As long as there's a dowry, no vice is vilified" (386–87, *quouiuis modi hic cum [mala] fama facile nubitur. / dum dos sit, nullum uitium uitio uortitur*). With this point, Saturio indicates that he knows how important a dowry is, but the ensuing lines show he does not take the matter seriously (388–96):

VIRG: ergo istuc facito ut ueniat in mentem tibi
me esse indotatam. SAT: caue sis tu istuc dixeris.
pol deum uirtute dicam et maiorum meum, 390
ne te indotatam dicas quoi dos sit domi:
...
si hoc accurassis lepide, quoi rei operam damus, 393

³⁴ Indeed, Saturio's word choice is worth noting. *Pro* combined with a kinship term is usually used in Roman comedy to denote someone who is not a blood or legal relative, but is treated like one, as I discuss in Chapter Three. With his use of *pro filia* for his actual daughter, Saturio distances himself from her, making it easier for him to treat her like an *ancilla* instead.

...
cum hac dote poteris uel mendico nubere.

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VIRG: Then make sure you keep in mind that I don't have a dowry.

SAT: Don't say that. Really, thanks to the gods and my ancestors, I will say, don't say you don't have a dowry when there's a dowry at home ... if you take care of this cleverly, the business we're working on ... with this dowry you'll be able to marry even—a beggar!

It may well be true that Virgo will get a dowry if their plan turns out well. But it is ironic, illogical, and irresponsible for a father to base the acquisition of a dowry on a scheme that will ruin any prospect of marriage if it goes awry.

When their argument ends and Virgo realizes that she cannot persuade her father against the plan, their language indicates how problematic Saturio's authority over her has become (397–99):

VIRG: quin tu me ducis, si quo ducturu's, pater?
uel tu me uende uel face quid tibi lubet.

SAT: bonum aequomque oras. sequere hac.

VIRG: dicto sum audiens.

VIRG: Why don't you lead me, if you're about to lead me anywhere, father?
Or sell me or do what you want.

SAT: You are speaking well and justly. Follow me here.

VIRG: I'm obeying your words.

When Virgo asks her father to “lead” her to the pimp's, she uses the word *duco*. This use plays on its common meaning of “marry,” especially coming directly after their discussion about dowry and marriage prospects. With this verb, Virgo points out that her father's choice to lead her to the pimp's house will determine her marriage prospects by endangering them. His response—that she speaks “well and justly” (*bonum aequomque oras*)—asserts with ludicrous pomposity that she has behaved as a daughter should by allowing him to lead her off, marry her, sell her, and do as he pleases with her. At the same time, his statement shows how troubling it is

that he can exercise paternal authority. What he views as “good and just” could easily ruin her future and her marriage, which are his responsibility to ensure.

Saturio tries to reassure Virgo that she will not be left at the pimp’s, that she does not need to worry about her reputation, and that she will gain a dowry out of the scheme. But his earlier conversation with Toxilus calls his assurances into question. When Toxilus explains that Saturio will claim her from Dordalus as soon as the payment is made, Saturio replies, “Let him have her himself, if I don’t bring her away from him immediately” (164, *sibi habeat, si non extemplo ab eo abduxero*).³⁵ While this statement can be read as an assurance that Saturio will not lose any time in reclaiming his daughter, it might also indicate that if she stays too long under the pimp’s control, she will be ruined: no longer valuable to, nor wanted by, her family. As discussed above, Virgo fears that even the shortest amount of time in the pimp’s custody will ruin her reputation and marriage prospects. Saturio’s ambiguous remark can be read as an acknowledgment, long before his daughter raises it herself, that such a fear is legitimate.

Once Virgo has been “sold” to the pimp, there is a moment of dramatic tension in which she is anxious that her father has not returned immediately (724–26):

VIRG: pater nunc cessat.
TOX: quid si ammoneam?
VIRG: tempus est.
TOX: heus, Saturio, exi. nunc est illa occasio 725
 inimicum ulcisci.
SAT: ecce me. numquid moror?

VIRG: My father’s still delaying.
TOX: How about if I remind him?
VIRG: It’s time.
TOX: Hey, Saturio, come out: Now is the moment to take vengeance on
 my enemy.
SAT: Look, I’m here. Am I late at all?

³⁵ Saturio’s use of the verb *abducere* implies that he will be breaking up a marriage when he takes his daughter from the pimp’s house, just as Antipho uses it in *Stichus* to try to break up the marriages he had arranged for his daughters (as discussed above).

Virgo is immediately anxious about being in the pimp's possession. Her worry is palpable in the quickness of her statement about Saturio's delay, and her distress would have been apparent in performance. Although he comes when called, her father seems to have lost track of whether or not he is on time, since he asks whether he had been delaying—indeed, he must be called out by Toxilus in the first place. This brief moment indicates how much higher Virgo's anxiety is than theirs, as the stakes are much higher for her.

From the beginning of Toxilus' plan to deceive Dordalus, Saturio has been willing to act as a pimp toward his daughter. Her beauty, cleverness, and status are commodities that he can exchange for a meal ticket. In fact, in a joking way, Dordalus takes more care of his possessions than this citizen father does. When the pimp brings out the money to pay for Virgo, he removes a negligible amount (two obols) from the agreed price (sixty minas), arguing that this is for the cost of the purse containing the money (685). When Sagaristio berates him for being cheap enough to begrudge the price of an old pouch, Dordalus replies, "Nothing is of so little worth to me that I would not be sorry if I lost it" (690, *nil mihi tam parui est quin me id pigeat perdere*). The effect of this line of Virgo, again, could be acted out.

As Toxilus remarks, this attitude is typical for a pimp (687), but Dordalus' maxim also strongly contrasts with Saturio's cavalier attitude about Virgo. The joke at the pimp's expense highlights Saturio's carelessness. The pimp will not settle for losing his old pouch, but the parasite does not mind the prospect of losing something as consequential as a citizen daughter. The pouch of money and the girl have the same value, as the payment is the physical embodiment of her worth. The slippage of boundaries between the vessel of payment and the girl herself is common in Plautus (e.g., *Asinaria*, *Aulularia*), and a similar phenomenon occurs in this play with the quips of Sagaristio when he first obtains the money from his master to buy

Lemniselenis, joking that it has horns, as it was originally allocated to purchase oxen. This joke sets up the equivalence between the money and the item being purchased by it, often played for comic or thematic effect in Plautus. But whereas Saturio adorns his daughter in borrowed finery and sells her body without worry, Dordalus is concerned for the shabby wallet holding the sixty minas he pays out.

In *Persa*, Plautus blurs the line between father and pimp as he stages a citizen man who disregards all of his responsibilities towards his unmarried daughter, even when she herself articulates them to him, for his own financial gain. The fact that Saturio sells her to a pimp for his own gain, without regard for the danger in which this action places her, likens his priorities to Dordalus'. As in *Stichus*, the character who cares about marriage and familial duty is the powerless one (Virgo), while her father misuses his *potestas* to hurt the vulnerable daughter he is supposed to protect.

The Miserly Father: Euclio of *Aulularia*

In Plautus' *Aulularia*, the citizen daughter Phaedria too has a father who puts the financial before the familial. Their Lar Familiaris, who delivers the play's prologue, wants to reward Phaedria for her reverence toward him. The deity allows Euclio, her father, to discover the pot of gold his ancestor hid in the house, so it can be used as her dowry. The miserly Euclio, though, refuses to spend the money and continues to hoard it. When the *senex* Megadorus seeks to marry Phaedria without a dowry, Euclio agrees. Unbeknownst to him, she is about to deliver a baby engendered by rape. Her rapist, the *adulescens* Lyconides, suddenly conceives of a desire

to marry her. After a scare about losing his gold, Euclio seems to change his ways and allows his daughter to marry Lyconides with the benefit of a dowry, but the ending of the play is not extant.

The consequences of Euclio's greed are staged repeatedly in the play, but I focus on the examples that show how his miserliness and uncaring attitude toward his daughter affect her future.³⁶ Euclio comes from generations of men who have hoarded money rather than bequeath it to their descendants, as the Lar Familiaris of the household notes in the prologue, discussing first the way Euclio's grandfather treated the money (9–15):

is quoniam moritur (ita auido ingenio fuit),	
numquam indicare id filio uoluit suo,	10
inopemque optauit potius eum relinquere	
quam eum thesaurum commonstraret filio;	
agri reliquit ei non magnum modum,	
quo cum labore magno et misere uiueret.	15

When he's dying (he had such a greedy nature), he didn't want to ever point it out to his son, and he wanted to leave him poor rather than show his son this treasure; he left him not a large measure of land, so he could live with great labor, and miserably.

The Lar goes on to explain that Euclio's father behaved in the same manner, with the added insult of not giving any honors to the Lar (18–19); Euclio has behaved likewise (22).³⁷ The Lar's judgment of these men makes the point (albeit a comically self-interested one)³⁸ that heads of households should behave more responsibly. Allowing children to live in poverty and deities to go unworshipped are actions the Lar feels compelled to punish.³⁹ The fact that the Lar gives the

³⁶ For an analysis of Euclio's greed and miserliness in the play, along with an overview of earlier scholarship on the issue, see Hernández (2004).

³⁷ Although Euclio and his father did not know about the hidden gold, they still behaved selfishly and impiously in their poverty. Hernández remarks on the greed of these men (2004, 239–40).

³⁸ The Lar's self-interested attitude is analyzed by Martin (2008, 100–105), who compares the Lar's prologue to the prologue of Menander's *Dyskolos* (105–109).

³⁹ Martin also discusses how the Lar acts on behalf of the people in his household (101).

prologue of this play is significant, as his status as a particularly Roman deity, along with the content of his speech, indicates that this prologue is a Plautine invention (Martin 2008).

Phaedria breaks the chain of neglect, worshiping the Lar daily with incense, wine, garlands, and more (23–25).⁴⁰ Her actions both identify the pattern of greed in the household as specifically male and provide one of the few examples of Phaedria’s character. Her willingness to take the time and resources to worship the Lar demonstrates her generosity and piety. Her generosity in particular contrasts with the greed of the dowered women whom Megadorus will complain about at length (475–536). With the Lar’s opening, Plautus comically makes the twofold critique that citizen men are at fault for harming the vulnerable and (as will be seen) that they are wrong about women.⁴¹

Later in the play, when Euclio tries to use his daughter’s welfare as a reason that he needs the pot of gold, his language rings false. Accusing Lyconides of having stolen his gold, he asks, “What ill have I deserved from you, young man, on account of which you are causing myself and my children to go to ruin?” (735–36, *quid ego <de te d>emerui, adulescens, mali, quam ob rem ita faceres meque meosque perditum ires liberos?*). But Euclio has never shown any intention of using his money to benefit his child. In fact, he has consistently avoided spending money on her, as did the grandfather and father, regarding their children. His disingenuousness is reinforced by the masculine accusative plural *liberos* for “offspring,” as if he is discussing nonexistent male children rather than his actual daughter (singular and feminine), whose marriage would benefit

⁴⁰ Martin notes the pattern of behavior toward the Lar that Phaedria breaks (2008, 102), as well as the fact that, as the household deity, he has a specific connection to and responsibility for her pregnancy and fertility (107–109).

⁴¹ I identify the same pattern of mistreatment and misconception in Terence’s *Eunuchus*, discussed in Chapter Three.

from the money.⁴² Euclio's continued resistance to providing a dowry for Phaedria, despite having the means to do so, contrasts with the many citizen men in *Trinummus* who put real effort and outlay into providing a dowry for Lesbonicus' sister despite difficulty accessing funds.⁴³

Megadorus, however, provides the greatest contrast with the vision of marriage staged in *Trinummus*, because his ideal marriage is an example of exactly what the men in that play want to prevent for Charmides' daughter. He is problematic, first of all, as a *senex amator* type, interested in a much younger woman. It is significant, however, that neither he nor anyone else in the play attributes his interest in Phaedria to erotic desire. Rather, Megadorus maintains that his interest is based on her poverty and her lack of dowry, as well as her ability to bear him children. His reasoning for seeking a poor and undowered wife consists largely of a laundry list of complaints about female greed, acquisitiveness, and spending (475–536). He sums up his diatribe as follows (532–35):

haec sunt atque aliae multae in magnis dotibus
incommoditates sumptusque intolerabiles.
nam quae indotata est, ea in potestate est uiri;
dotatae mactant et malo et damno uiros. 535

These and many others are the inconveniences and intolerable expenses attendant on large dowries. Because when she is undowered, she is in the power of her husband; the dowered wives punish their husbands with suffering and loss.

⁴² In fact, it is possible to read this remark in a different way: Euclio might be thinking of the “offspring” he refers to here as the gold, not his biological offspring. There is an analogy throughout the play between the girl and the gold, the two types of Euclio's property that are under threat. Taken one step further, the comparison is most precise between Phaedria's womb and the pot (the *aula*, itself a uterine shape), and then her child and the actual gold. Just as the gold gives value to the pot, so the Roman offspring gives value to the womb. Euclio's use of *liberos* in this scene, which indicates multiple offspring, makes more sense when applied to the gold. He is unconcerned with his actual daughter.

⁴³ Hernández notes that Euclio's unwillingness to provide his daughter with a dowry and to spend money on her wedding characterize him negatively (2004, 232, 234), calling him “un padre roñoso y avido” (234).

He wants an undowered wife because he wants complete control (534, *potestas*) in his marriage. A dowered wife would have some rights over her property, even if her husband would have been in charge of managing it.⁴⁴ Megadorus is proposing exactly the type of marriage that the men in *Trinummus* fear: married to him, Phaedria would be completely vulnerable to his whims, lacking the leverage a dowry brings.

How It's Supposed to Work: *Trinummus*

In *Trinummus*, the last of Plautus' plays to showcase paternal responsibility for daughters, the father Charmides, out of town on business, has left his children and property in the hands of two trusted friends, the *senes* Megaronides and Callicles. Without his son's knowledge, he has hidden treasure in the house that can be used as his daughter's dowry,⁴⁵ a secret entrusted only to Callicles because of Lesbonicus' spendthrift ways. All three of the old men in the play do their best to protect Charmides' daughter from a disadvantageous marriage. Even the wastrel son, her brother Lesbonicus, realizes that he must grow up and look out for his sister. He articulates bitterly, in a panic, the danger he has exposed her to, and the shame he and his family would incur if he failed to do his proper duty as her *tutor*.

⁴⁴ Treggiari (1991, 323–31). Indeed, Treggiari discusses Megadorus in *Aulularia* (329–30) as well as other Plautine evidence for the dowry.

⁴⁵ Plautus directs his audience to take *Trinummus* as a counterpart to *Aulularia* by having a treasure hidden in the household, to be used as a dowry for the citizen girl, as a central element of the plot in both plays.

marriage and there will be no way to keep her husband answerable to her natal family. A missing dowry will also damage her reputation, as again, Lesbonicus points out to Lysiteles (688–91):

nolo ego mi te tam prospicere qui meam egestatem leues,
sed ut inops infamis ne sim, ne mi hanc famam differant,
me germanam meam sororem in concubinatum tibi, 690
si sine dote <dem>, dedisse magis quam in matrimonium.

I don't want you to look out for me so that you lessen my poverty, but so that I am not resourceless and disreputable, so that they don't spread this rumor about me, that I gave my own true sister into concubinage with you, if I give her without a dowry, rather than into marriage.

A marriage without a dowry is, in fact, not a marriage at all, but concubinage, says Lesbonicus, in a remarkable statement. The match would ruin his sister's reputation and the family's as well. The general disgrace and damage that would ensue from a dowerless marriage show that he understands how important a social norm it is for male kin to provide for a citizen woman's marital security by means of a dowry.⁴⁷

Lesbonicus is not the only figure concerned with his sister's marriage prospects. In the absence of their father Charmides, several of his friends, *senes* themselves, try to figure out how to protect his family and daughter.⁴⁸ Callicles, asked to look after the family, pays out of his own pocket to buy the family home when Lesbonicus puts it up for sale to raise money, a transaction that does not benefit him personally (179–82):

emi egomet potius aedis, argentum dedi

⁴⁷ For a different view of him, as “a one-sided monomaniac passionately concerned over his sister's dowry,” see Anderson (1979, 335–36), who thinks that Lesbonicus is concerned more with the family's reputation than with affection for his sister (343). Perhaps so, but I think at the very least Lesbonicus is concerned that she will suffer because of his mistakes (585–89) and because she has no financial resources of her own (681–83). Papaioannou argues that Lesbonicus' points about dowry may explain on a metaliterary level why marriage without dowry cannot occur in Roman drama the way it can in Greek (e.g., *Dyskolos*), and that it “may be read as an admission that there are certain boundaries which even the most experimental playwright may not be allowed to cross” (2016, 180). I disagree; Plautus is unafraid to stage undowered marriage in *Aulularia* and what borders on paternal *lenocinium* in *Stichus* and *Persa*.

⁴⁸ On the importance of these old men in the play, see Sharrock (2014, 170–76).

thesauri causa, ut saluom amico traderem.
neque adeo hasce emi mihi neque usurae meae:
illi redemi rursum, a me argentum dedi.

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I bought the house myself instead, I paid because of the treasure, so I could hand it over safe to my friend. And moreover, I didn't buy it for myself or for my own enjoyment: I bought it back for him, and I paid my own money.

Since Callicles knows about the money Charmides hid, he wants to protect the house where it is being kept. He is also willing to use it as a dowry for Charmides' daughter, if necessary: "If something should happen to him, I certainly have a dowry which I could give to his daughter, who was entrusted to me, so I could place her in a match worthy of her" (157–59, *si quid eo fuerit, certe illius filiae, / quae mihi mandata est, habeo dotem unde dem, / ut eam in se dignam condicionem collocem*). He knows that a "worthy" (159, *dignam*) match can be attained only through a dowry, and is prepared to act as a stand-in for the girl's absent father by providing it for her. He views the prospect of undowered marriage as an outrage (612, *flagitium*), and will not allow it to happen (731–33).

Likewise, another family friend, Megaronides, notes that if she is married without a dowry, her father will be disgraced, as he will appear to have been greedy enough to pocket the dowry (734–43). At the same time, he wants her to make "an excellent match" (746, *condicio ... primaria*), so he devises a scheme to give the dowry to her without her spendthrift brother's involvement. Although his plan immediately fails, he and Callicles both are concerned enough about this girl's marriage and her family's reputation that they become personally and financially involved in securing her future.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Anderson (1979, 334–35) and Stein (1970, 8) note that both men discuss how intolerable wives are, which is misogynist humor. This characterization may somewhat undermine their concern about Charmides' daughter's marriage, but it also fits with the genre's regular pattern of endorsing love among young people while showing comic disharmony in the elder generation.

The girl's father, Charmides, although absent for most of the play, also takes his responsibility for his children seriously. He makes sure his children have competent guardians while he is away (Megaronides and Callicles).⁵⁰ When he arrives home, his first concern is for his children (1073–75). He is excited for his daughter to make a good match (1133, 1135) and insists she bring a dowry to the new marriage, even when Lysiteles tries one last time to marry her without a dowry: “If she pleases you, the dowry she gives to you must also be pleasing. Basically, you won't marry as you want, unless you take what you don't want” (1159–60, *si illa tibi placet, placenda dos quoque est quam dat tibi. / postremo quod uis non duces, nisi illud quod non uis feres*).⁵¹ All the citizen men in *Trinummus*, then, are determined not to risk this girl's future—even though there is no sign that her groom is ill-intentioned—by placing her in a dowerless, i.e., powerless, marriage.

In *Trinummus*, Plautus' final say on the subject of fathers and daughters, he dispenses with the method he uses in *Stichus*, *Persa*, and *Aulularia*. In those three plays, he stages a father who fails to protect his daughter adequately, and thereby implicitly criticizes the unconditional power of the Roman citizen father. But in *Trinummus*, Plautus stages characters explicitly and repeatedly articulating the responsibility of citizen men to secure a citizen girl's future. This change in technique indicates that Plautus wanted to get this message across to his audience: citizen girls have worth, and value, and their lives deserve to be taken seriously by their kin.

⁵⁰ For the legal valence of Charmides' entrusting his children to his friends, see Karakasis (2003, 198–200).

⁵¹ Anderson points out that Charmides is portrayed more favorably than Plautus' usual *senes*, and indeed, than most other characters in the play (1979, 339–40). Stein, however, questions his morality (1970, 11).

Terence: Supporting Motions

To close out this chapter, I give a brief excursus on Terence. For this playwright, staging the father-son relationship is a priority. There are no plays by Terence that centrally feature fathers and daughters, as there are in Plautus' corpus. But he still stages both problematic and exemplary fathers in regard to daughters, and uses a pattern of implicit criticism, like Plautus, to point out the failings of certain fathers where their daughters are concerned.

In *Heauton Timoroumenos*, Chremes orders his wife Sostrata to expose their daughter at her birth. His wife disobeys him, instead giving the child to an old woman to raise. When the family rediscovers her as a marriageable girl with whom their neighbor's son is in love, Chremes is surprisingly willing to accept her: "Often it's not permitted for a man to be as he wants, if the situation doesn't let him. Now it's the time for me to desire a daughter; once, I desired nothing less" (666–67, *non licet hominem esse saepe ita ut volt, si res non sinit. / nunc ita tempus est mi ut cupiam filiam, olim nil minus*). Chremes' attitude toward his daughter is to acknowledge her when she is useful to him—because her presence gives him a formal excuse to disinherit his son, at whom he is angry—but otherwise, he has no use for her and never wanted her.⁵² This Chremes is one of Terence's more despicable fathers: he is cruel to his wife, son, and daughter.

In Terence's *Phormio*, Chremes becomes invested in his daughter's welfare only when he faces consequences for neglecting her. He feels compelled to arrange a marriage for his illegitimate daughter from a bigamous second marriage, but his impetus for marrying her to the son of his brother Demipho is to keep her true parentage from affecting his reputation and

⁵² Sostrata recounts how Chremes ordered her to abandon a female child: "Do you remember you told me, with the greatest concern, when I was pregnant, that if I had a girl, you didn't want to raise her?" (626–27, *meministin me gravidam et mihi te maximo opere edicere, / si puellam parerem, nolle tolli?*).

reaching the ears of his wife.⁵³ Chremes is willing to make a match for her only if it does not reveal his misconduct, and so he is limited in his choice of husband for her. His self-interest has affected his daughter's marriage prospects. His delay in arranging a marriage for her, moreover, has prompted his second wife to travel with their daughter to find him. The girl's mother dies in the process, unable to locate her husband, because Chremes has given her false name.

In the same play, the parasite Phormio criticizes the other father, Demipho, for his callous treatment of the citizen girl his son has married. Demipho offers the young woman to Phormio in exchange for a dowry of five minas. Phormio refuses, indignant: "So are you really saying that, like when you've used up a *meretrix*, the law says to pay her price and then send her away?" (413–14, *itan tandem, quaeso, itidem ut meretricem ubi abusu' sis, / mercedem dare lex iubet ei atque amittere?*). Phormio objects to Demipho's trafficking of his young daughter-in-law. Treating a citizen girl this way is treating her as a *meretrix*.

In *Andria*, however, Terence stages a father who cares deeply about the welfare of his daughters. Chremes has lost one daughter to accident and is hyper-protective of his remaining one, unwilling to put her future and marriage at risk. He is consistently vigilant about her, and refuses to risk her future by marrying her off hastily to a young man in love with another girl, remarking, "It's a serious thing for a daughter to be in danger" (566, *at istuc perichum in filia fieri gravest*). He also is overjoyed at his reunion with his missing daughter at the end of the

⁵³ Indeed, the behavior of both Chremes in *Phormio* and Chremes in *HT* harms the wife in addition to the daughter. Chremes in *HT* causes Sostrata great emotional pain when he forces her to expose their daughter and she chooses not to, against his will, as well as anxiety later over how he will react to the fact that the girl is still alive. Chremes in *Phormio* delays handling his daughter's betrothal, causing her mother anxiety and driving her to die bringing the girl to Athens to try to find him. He also wounds his Athenian wife Nausistrata, who does find out about his infidelity and is insulted and hurt.

play. Chremes in *Andria* is Terence's version of *Trinummus* in microcosm: a father who refuses even to entertain the idea of putting his daughter at risk.

Conclusion

All four Plautine plays that feature fathers and daughters show that the daughters are desperately at risk from their father's selfishness, negligence, and skewed values. In *Stichus* and *Persa* in particular, the women know the risk they face from mismanaged *patria potestas* and say so at length. Phaedria in *Aulularia* does not get to appear onstage, but her fear about her marriage prospects is easy to imagine, given her father's miserliness and her pregnancy. In *Trinummus*, Charmides' daughter, likewise invisible, might easily wonder where he is, and worry about her own prospects, given her brother's profligacy.

The plays in which fathers misuse their *potestas* toward their daughters become more and more explicit in staging the consequences of this risk. In the earliest, *Stichus*, married young women successfully defend themselves against their father's wishes. Although the problems he causes are real, the marriages are never seriously threatened. In *Persa* and *Aulularia*, Plautus emphasizes the danger poor daughters face because of a selfish father. Especially in *Persa*, when Virgo herself articulates the risk she faces and the fear she feels, Plautus asks his audience to feel the vulnerability of her position. In *Aulularia*, although Phaedria does not get to speak, Megadorus articulates the disadvantage she will face in her marriage as his undowered wife. Finally, in *Trinummus*, Plautus' final word on the subject, citizen men speak plainly about the proper way to treat a citizen daughter to secure her a good marriage. The play's insistent staging of this same conversation shows that its content would be recognizable and relevant to audience

members, and dramatizes the importance of both a good marriage for a daughter, and talking about it.

CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN HELPING WOMEN:

ADOPTIVE MOTHERHOOD AND THE PROTECTED DAUGHTER

The previous chapter dealt with the critical view of Roman citizen fathers that Plautus and Terence take in their plays, regarding in particular how they treat their daughters. In this chapter, I examine a group of Roman comedies that feature households led by disadvantaged women in charge of girls who turn out to be citizens.¹ I show that women in Roman comedy are uniformly protective of the young women for whom they are responsible. Just as Roman citizen wives are deeply anxious about their sons and especially their daughters (James 2015, 120–22), unconventional mothers (i.e., women who are not citizen wives, though they may be citizens) consistently protect the girls they raise. This pattern applies to women of all statuses: *meretrices* in charge of foster sisters (*Andria*, *Eunuchus*) and foster daughters (*Cistellaria*), disadvantaged and unmarried biological mothers (*Epidicus*; *Adelphoe*, *Phormio*),² and even *meretrices* who

¹ Women who lead households in these plays are in charge only of young women, never young men. For an overview of non-citizen mothers and daughters in New Comedy, see Fantham (2004a, 226–29).

² Sostrata in *Adelphoe* is successful in arranging a stable situation for her daughter, but Chremes' second wife in *Phormio* dies on her quest to make him provide for their daughter (750). Although these women are of the citizen class, their poverty and lack of support set them apart from married citizen wives, who enjoy financial advantages and greater stability. Hegio in *Adelphoe* complains that his and Sostrata's poverty means the wealthy can exploit them (607).

raise their own daughters to become sex workers themselves (*Asinaria*, *Cistellaria*, *Truculentus*). Enslaved members of female-led households also contribute to looking out for the daughter-figure in their household (*Truculentus*; *Adelphoe*, *Andria*, *Eunuchus*, *Phormio*).

The household-wide goal to protect the girl at stake provides a strong contrast to the priorities of many male-led families in Roman comedy. *Patresfamiliae*, with some important exceptions, tend to prioritize money and sex over the wishes and welfare of their sons and daughters. At the very least, they cause problems for themselves and their wives and children, as discussed in Chapter One. These patterns are especially striking because they are consistent from Plautus to Terence. Both playwrights exhibit an active program of staging positive models of unconventional family relationships in contrast with the conventional, yet dysfunctional, model of the family led by the *paterfamilias*. This tendency is one of the ways in which these dramatists critique and challenge the dominant Roman patriarchal ideology.

Non-citizen and unmarried women in Roman comedy can assume the role of the father.³ These women become responsible for the young girls in their care and the arrangers of and authority over their marriages.⁴ This point is especially relevant for New Comedy, because in Menander's drama, a central concern of the genre is the father's duty to arrange the marriage of his children. The various conflicts that ensue in this process are conventionally resolved by marriage.⁵ As I argue here, Plautus and Terence at times transfer this authoritative role, a key element of their genre, to underprivileged females. These families led by female adoptive

³ Gilula notes, of *Cistellaria*, that the relationship between an older *meretrix* and a younger girl "may be described as a one-parent family. Such families with a woman at its head are the only families in which a woman has an authority comparable to that of a *paterfamilias*" (2004, 240).

⁴ Although in practice, women could be involved in the betrothal process, the consent of the *paterfamilias* was essential to validate a marriage (Treggiari 1991, 134, 170–76).

⁵ Braund notes that "marriage is the objective of the essential comic plot" (2005, 40).

guardians also show a different way to create and belong to a family than conventional ideology endorses. Such families of choice would have been meaningful to audience members who did not, or could not, live in a nuclear family.

I proceed play-by-play through the comedies that feature households led by women, beginning with the *meretrix*-led households in *Andria*, *Eunuchus*, and *Cistellaria*. The *meretrices* Chrysis (*Andria*) and Thais (*Eunuchus*) act as surrogate sisters to the girls they protect, Pamphila and Glycerium respectively. As the heads of households, however, they also function as parental figures for the girls, who seem to be a good deal younger.⁶ I also examine the role that enslaved women play in protecting these young girls. I then turn to Melaenis in *Cistellaria*, a former *meretrix* in charge of her household. Because she is the adoptive mother of Selenium, she and her daughter can be compared with the biological mother-daughter pair of *meretrices*, Lena and Gymnasium, in the same play. I show that in all these plays, women are protective guardians of their charges, are contrasted positively to citizen men, and act as overseers of the marriage-like relationships of the girls in their care.

Andria

In Terence's *Andria*, many characters consider the *meretrix* Chrysis and her ward Glycerium to be like sisters. The *senex* Simo remarks, "They say she's Chrysis' sister" (124, *sororem esse aiunt Chrysidis*), calling Glycerium her sister (129, *soror*). Later, Chrysis' cousin Crito describes the two similarly: "She was always said to be and considered her sister" (807,

⁶ Thais is older than Pamphila, as she is older than Pamphila's older brother (*Eu.* 527). Chrysis' age is not indicated in the play, but she is old enough to be established as a *meretrix* in Athens.

semper eius dictast esse haec atque habitast soror).⁷ Glycerium was brought into the family of Chrysis' father as a small child, after the uncle with whom she was traveling was killed in a shipwreck on Andros (221–24, 923–34). The guardianship of the same father-figure created the sister-like bond between the two girls.

Yet after an unspecified amount of time, Chrysis' family ceases to support the two women, who move from Andros to Athens because of “poverty and the neglect of their male kin” (71, *inopia et cognatorum neglegentia*). After much pressure from young citizen men, Chrysis reluctantly becomes a *meretrix* (74–79). As a rule, citizen men have ruined her life,⁸ and Chrysis must step up to do their job of providing for and protecting her surrogate sister. Knowing that she is a displaced citizen, Chrysis allows her monogamous relationship with Pamphilus, who loves Glycerium and wants urgently to marry her, as she is pregnant with his child.

Glycerium is put at real risk when her guardian is struck by a fatal illness, but Chrysis tries to ensure that the girl stays safe, even after her death.⁹ As Pamphilus recounts, Chrysis transfers guardianship of Glycerium to him just before she dies, making him swear to protect her (282–97):

etiam nunc mihi
scripta illa dicta sunt in animo Chrysidis
de Glycerio. iam ferme moriens me vocat.
accessi, vos semotae, nos soli. incipit: 285
“mi Pamphile, huius formam atque aetatem vides,

⁷ The characters in both *Andria* and *Eunuchus* consistently stress that the women are not blood relatives through such workarounds (“they say,” “said to be,” “considered”). This phrasing acknowledges that the characters in the play know the kinship is adoptive, as well as hints to the audience that the girl in question will be restored to her family.

⁸ An exception might be found in Chrysis' father, who is mentioned as Glycerium's protector later in the play (924–25). It seems likely that he has died.

⁹ As McGarrity notes of this scene, “Chrysis' first concern is for the physical and financial security of Glycerium, so that she will not be forced into the life of a *meretrix* as had befallen Chrysis earlier. Her own affection and the feeling of Glycerium for Pamphilus are the final points in her argument” (1978, 105).

nec clam te est quam illi nunc utraeque inutiles
 et ad pudicitiam et ad rem tutandam sient.
 quod ego per hanc te dexteram et genium tuom,
 per tuam fidem perque huius solitudinem 290
 te obtestor ne abs te hanc segrege neu deseras.
 si te in germani fratris dilexi loco
 sive haec te solum semper fecit maxumi
 seu tibi morigera fuit in rebus omnibus,
 te isti virum do, amicum, tutorem, patrem; 295
 bona nostra haec tibi permitto et tuae mando fide.”
 hanc mi in manum dat. mors continuo ipsam occupat.
 accepi, acceptam servabo.

Even now the words of Chrysis about Glycerium are written in my mind. Just when she was dying she called for me. I came, you all were removed, we were alone. She began: “My Pamphilus, you see her beauty and youth, and it is no secret to you that these will both now be useless for protecting her chastity and her property. Thus by your right hand and by your character, by your faithfulness and her solitude, I beseech you neither to divide yourself from her nor to desert her. If I have loved you in the place of a true brother, or if she always thought the most of you alone, or if she was dutiful to you in all things, I give you to her as a husband, friend, guardian, father; I entrust this our property to you and I hand it over to your faithfulness.” She put her into my hand. Immediately death overtook her. I accepted, and I will honor the girl as accepted.

As she addresses Pamphilus, Chrysis invokes her love for him as a brother: “If I have loved you in the place of a true brother” (292, *si te in germani fratris dilexi loco*). To her, Pamphilus is “in the place of” (*in ... loco*) a brother, language that recalls adoptive or unofficial family relationships throughout Roman comedy. It is common, for example, for a parent to take in a child *pro filio* (“as a son”) or *pro filia* (“as a daughter”),¹⁰ as well as for a man to regard a woman whom he cannot legally marry as though she were his wife (*pro uxore*). Pamphilus considers Glycerium *pro uxore* (146, 273).¹¹ This formula can also be recast as *in uxoris loco*, “in the place of a wife”

¹⁰ For example, Melaenis in *Cistellaria* accepts the adopted Selenium “as a daughter” (172, *pro filia*). Thais’ mother in *Eunuchus* raises young Pamphila “as if she were a daughter” (117, *ita uti si esset filia*). In *Truculentus*, the *meretrix* Phronesium treats a baby “as a son” (805, *pro filiolo*).

¹¹ For regarding a woman *pro uxore* in comedy, and comparanda, see Shipp (1960, ad 146, 5–6). See James on marriage terminology used for non-citizen relationships in Roman comedy (2012, 430–32).

(*HT* 104),¹² along the same lines as Chrysis' "in the place of a brother" (*in ... fratris ... loco*).

Her language about Pamphilus evokes the creation of family relationships throughout the corpus of Roman comedy, and ties him, as a brother, to her own small created family comprised of herself and her foster-sister.

Notable, however, is Chrysis' phrase "true brother" (292, *germani fratris*). The adjective *germanus* is a somewhat technical term that denotes a specific family relationship: that of a "true" or "full" sibling; i.e., brothers and sisters who have the same two parents (*OLD* s.v. *germanus*, 1). The adjective can also be used generally to mean "true," "genuine," "actual," etc. (*OLD* s.v. *germanus*, 3). The term is used only twice more in Terence, both times referring to biological brothers in, aptly, *Adelphoe*.¹³ Chrysis' use of it for her relationship with Pamphilus, then, is oxymoronic: there is no way he can be both "in the place of a brother" as well as a "true brother." With this contradictory phrasing, Terence draws attention to his application of conventionally defined family terms to unconventional relationships.

The creation of this unconventional family is cemented in the pseudo-marriage that Chrysis enacts between Pamphilus and Glycerium in the same scene. Her speech has long been compared to the language of Roman marriage ceremonies. She initiates the new union by summoning Pamphilus, entrusting Glycerium to him, and making a final gesture: "She put her into my hand" (297, *hanc mi in manum dat*). This phrase evokes the *dextrarum iunctio*, the joining of right hands that symbolized marital commitment in ancient Rome. The language is

¹² Throughout, I use the abbreviation *HT* to refer to Terence's *Heauton Timoroumenos*.

¹³ In Terence, the word refers to the full brothers Ctesipho and Aeschinus (269), and Micio and Demea (957). In Plautus, the term is used most often for true siblings (*Aul.* 122; *Bacch.* 39; *Capt.* 1015; *Men.* 71, 232, 1082, 1102, 1125; *Trin.* 690), once to mean "brotherly" (*Cas.* 615), and a few times in its general use (*Capt.* 288, *Most.* 40, *Poen.* 137, *Rud.* 737). Most interestingly, the word is used for the lovers Alcesimarchus and Selenium in *Cistellaria* (451), as I discuss below. The adjective is used to describe a non-sibling relationship also in *Miles Gloriosus* (238, 383, 442) and *Truculentus* (438).

particularly evocative because the phrase *in manum* is the technical term Roman jurists use to refer to *manus* marriage, a type of Roman marriage still current when *Andria* was composed (Williams 1958, 20–22; Hersch 2010, 201–202; Treggiari 1991, 16–36).

In a *manus* marriage, the bride underwent a change of status, exiting the household and *potestas* of her father to become the property of her husband; legally, she would have the status of his daughter (Hersch 2010, 23–27, 201–202; Treggiari 1991, 16–36). Perhaps Chrysis’ notion that Pamphilus will be a “father” (295, *patrem*) to Glycerium points further to this type of marriage. This scene is a unique example of a mother figure handing a daughter into marriage, even though a mother could not legally authorize the marriage of her children—only their father or closest male relative could (Hersch 2010, 202).¹⁴ The ritual is even more transgressive given that only Roman citizens could officially initiate or participate in a marriage. Yet here, Chrysis, a non-citizen woman unrelated to Glycerium, takes the authoritative role that belongs to a citizen father, officiating at a marriage that is by no means official.¹⁵

Other characters honor the unconventional bonds created in *Andria* as if they represent legal family ties. For example, Chrysis’ cousin Crito, who appears at the end of the play to identify Glycerium as a citizen, points out that he is entitled to inherit any of Chrysis’ property: “At her death, this property returns to me by law” (799, *eius morte ea ad me lege redierunt*

¹⁴ Hersch suggests that this unprecedented scene of a mother handing her daughter into *manus* might be a result of reference to Greek ritual, a depiction of an atypical betrothal, or perhaps a mix of Greek and Roman ritual elements (2010, 202, 202n.290).

¹⁵ Marriage terminology used to describe relationships that do not fall under the legal definition of marriage is a known phenomenon in Roman life and literature and a pattern found regularly in Plautus and Terence; in fact, the idea of a “slave marriage” is the central plot of Plautus’ *Casina*. For the use of marriage language regarding unofficial unions, see James (2012, 428–36). For further discussion and sources, see Rawson (1974, 283n.12, n.14), Treggiari (1981, 77), Phang (2001, 91, 197–201). See also Hersch for a discussion of Roman marriages not sanctioned by the legal system, including a discussion of *Casina* (2010, 27–33).

bona). Yet later, as Crito talks with Mysis, an enslaved woman belonging to Chrysis, he remarks that, for several reasons, he will not be taking possession of the estate (809–16):

semper eius dictast esse haec atque habitast soror.
quae illius fuere possidet. nunc me hospitem 810
litis sequi quam hic mihi sit facile atque utile
aliorum exempla commonent. simul arbitror
iam aliquem esse amicum et defensorem ei. nam fere
grandicula iam profectast illinc. clamitent
me sycophantam, hereditatem persequi 815
mendicum. tum ipsam despoliare non lubet.

She was always said to be and considered her sister. She is in possession of what was Chrysis' property. Now the examples of other people warn me just how simple and advantageous it would be for me, as a foreigner, to bring a lawsuit against her here. At the same time, I think she has some friend and defender for herself now. For she left that land almost grown up at the time. They will call me a cheater, a beggar pursuing an inheritance. In addition, I don't want to rob her.

Crito's motives to leave Chrysis' estate for Glycerium are partially self-interested: as he notes sarcastically, it will be difficult for a foreigner to carry out a lawsuit (810–12); he is concerned about his own reputation (814–16); and he thinks a man working on Glycerium's behalf might stop him from obtaining the money (812–13). At the same time, he is somewhat motivated by concern for Glycerium's welfare (816) and by the fact, which heads his list of reasons, that she was effectively Chrysis' sister (809). Similarly, Mysis honors the marriage-like bond that Chrysis creates between Pamphilus and Glycerium, as she mentions that she considered him a husband to Glycerium before they were legally married: "I thought Pamphilus was her friend, her lover, her husband prepared for any situation!" (718, *virum*).

Not only Chrysis, but also other lower-class and enslaved women work to protect Glycerium.¹⁶ After Chrysis' death, Mysis regularly interacts with Pamphilus to make sure that

¹⁶ As Strobel points out, it is common for non-citizen women to show a great deal of care for the young citizen women in Terence's plays, including Mysis and Lesbia in *Andria*, Pythias and Dorias in *Eunuchus* (discussed below), Sophrona in *Phormio*, and Canthara in *Adelphoe* (2004, 139–53).

he provides her with the support she needs. When she overhears him in despair about his father's plan to marry him to someone else, she must intervene to represent the pregnant Glycerium: "But now it's extremely important that either he talk with her, or that I say something to him about her" (265–66). When Mysis does speak with him, she details Glycerium's physical and mental state: she is in pain from labor, upset because Pamphilus is supposedly marrying, and worried that he will abandon her (268–70). Throughout the play, Mysis continues to seek Pamphilus out so as to assuage Glycerium's worry (683–98), and becomes distressed when she thinks she can no longer trust him (716–20). Mysis also employs a midwife to attend to Glycerium, and both free and enslaved women assist at the birth of her child (481–86, 770–71). The midwife, too, is concerned that Pamphilus not abandon Glycerium and the child (459–66, 487–88).

Eunuchus

Thais and Pamphila in Terence's *Eunuchus* are in a similar situation. Pamphila was kidnapped from Athens as a young girl (108–109) and given to Thais' mother (108–10). Just as Chrysis' father raised both Chrysis and Glycerium together, Thais' mother "began to teach and raise her carefully, just as if she were her own daughter" (116–17, *coepit studiose omnia / docere, educere, ita uti si esset filia*). Her attention and care resulted in a sisterly bond between the two girls, as Thais remarks: "Most people thought she was my sister" (118, *sororem plerique esse credebant meam*).

Pamphila is referred to as Thais' sister twice more. When Thais explains her hope that the soldier Thraso will bring Pamphila to her from overseas, she says: "First, because she is called my sister, and moreover, since I can restore and return her to her own family" (146–47,

primum quod soror est dicta praeterea ut suis / restituam ac reddam). Thais specifies that the bond of sisterhood is her primary reason for desiring Pamphila's welfare. This bond, and the attendant obligation to take care of the girl, is her first priority. Second is Thais' mission to restore Pamphila to her family (147). As with Chrysis of *Andria*, she distinguishes between the surrogate sister that she represents to Pamphila (*soror est dicta*), and her blood family (*suis*). Finally, Pamphila's recovery will benefit her, as she needs a social network: "I am alone: I have no one here, neither friend nor relative" (147–48, *sola sum: habeo hic neminem / neque amicum neque cognatum*).¹⁷

Phaedria, Thais' lover, is the last person in the play to refer to Pamphila as Thais' sister, when he recaps Thais' words: "She is called her sister" (157, *soror dictast*). He responds to Thais' plan, however, with self-pity for being temporarily denied her affections: "Indeed, all these words now come back, in the end, to this point: I'm locked out, he's let in" (158–59, *nempe omnia haec nunc verba huc redeunt denique: / ego excludor, ille recipitur*). He also responds with suspicion: "Unless you love him more than me and now you're afraid that she who arrived will seize that guy from you" (160–1, *nisi illum plus amas quam me et istam nunc times / quae advectast ne illum talem praeripiat tibi*).¹⁸ Although Phaedria calls the women sisters, his conception of their relationship and of Thais' motivation is completely mistaken. As she explains (197–206), he is judging her "by the nature of other women" (198, *ex aliarum*

¹⁷ Barsby discusses Thais' motives, both altruistic and self-interested, and concludes that Terence presents a fairly sympathetic portrait of her (1999, 100, ad 149).

¹⁸ Phaedria is right that Thraso will desire Pamphila, and the verb he uses, *praeripiat* (161, "seize") foreshadows the etymologically-related *eripio*, used later by both Thais and Thraso to describe Thraso's attempt to seize her (739, 773, 796). In Phaedria's formulation, though, Pamphila is the subject of the verb, the one doing the snatching. Phaedria means that her beauty will attract the soldier, but his diction betrays how wrong he is about both women.

ingeniis),¹⁹ but she is in fact acting on Pamphila's behalf: "for the sake of the *virgo*"²⁰ (202, *causa virginis*).²¹ Phaedria thinks she is threatened by Pamphila's beauty, but as the action of the play shows, the one threatened by that beauty is Pamphila herself, and Thais does what she can to protect her.²²

For the remainder of the play, Pamphila is frequently described as *soror*, but only in relation to her blood brother, Chremes (521, 525, 621, 745, 766). At the end, he calls Pamphila his sister (806, *meam sororem*) as he defends her to Thraso, signaling that she has successfully been recognized as a citizen and transferred to his family. Earlier, however, Chremes too doubts Thais' motives and relationship to Pamphila. When he mentions that he was questioned by Thais about his lost sister, he, like Phaedria, speculates wrongly about her motives, thinking that Thais was trying to pass *herself* off as his sister. This suspicion is based on his presumption of her boldness (525, *audacia*), and as he admits, is not logical at all,²³ since Thais is older than he is, but his sister would be sixteen (526–27). Thais has not falsely

¹⁹ Barsby remarks that the stereotype of the independent *meretrix* includes "mercenariness and greed," and that the audience might think Thais conforms to this type during Phaedria and Parmeno's dialogue. But they would rethink this judgment when she gives an explanation here. "Since by convention monologue speakers do not lie, we have to take at face value her closing speech, and thus to revise our assessment of her character" (Barsby 1999, 100).

²⁰ The word *virgo* does not have a neat English correspondent. As Barsby summarizes, it is "the standard term for unmarried girls of 'respectable' background" (1999, ad 132). Watson gives an overview of the word in Roman comedy, showing that it denotes a young, respectable, unmarried but marriageable citizen girl (1983, 120).

²¹ Dutsch gives an account of the propensity for Terence's *meretrices* to work on behalf of citizen girls, especially Bacchis in *Hecyra*, Thais in *Eunuchus*, and Chrysis in *Andria*. She compares Chrysis and Thais in particular to Roman citizen mothers (2019, 212–13).

²² In fact, Phaedria himself might be disingenuous about the depth of his own feelings for Thais, as he is willing to share her with Thraso at the close of the play (1083–85).

²³ Barsby notes that Chremes "fails to understand the situation" here as well as when he suspects Thais might want to lay claim to his estate (1999, ad 520, ad 525).

inserted herself into the role of Chremes' sister for her own benefit, but has taken it upon herself to act as a mother and older sister to Pamphila, out of their sisterly bond and for the sake of Pamphila's welfare. Chremes too is wrong about the nature of their relationship.

In fact, Thais is a maternal guardian figure. She and the other women in her household try to guide and secure Pamphila's safe return to her birth family, through tactful planning and conversations with men.²⁴ Not only is she dedicated to finding Pamphila's family, she is also fiercely protective of her. She is concerned about potential violence against her when Thraso attempts to take her back (739–42):

credo equidem illum iam adfuturum esse ut illam a me eripiat. sine veniat.
atqui si illam digito attigerit uno, oculi ilico effodientur. 740
usque adeo ego illius ferre possum ineptiam et magnifica verba,
verba dum sint. verum enim si ad rem conferentur vapulabit.

Indeed, I think he's about to come now to snatch her from me. Let him come. But if he touches her with a single finger, his eyes will be gouged out then and there. I can bear his inept and bragging words as long as they are words. But if he takes action, he'll be beaten up.

Thais' threat is quite violent and betrays her protective instinct and responsibility for Pamphila. There is a surprisingly large amount of elision in these lines, betraying how upset she is at the prospect of harm to Pamphila. With Chremes' assistance, Thais is able to stop Thraso's attempt on Pamphila, but cannot protect her from the unprecedented violation that Chaerea commits when he enters the house in disguise and rapes her.²⁵

²⁴ 144–52, 202–206, 500–505, 515–24, 619–20, 627–28, 665–67, 722–24, 850–909.

²⁵ Chaerea disguises himself as a eunuch, as his brother has planned to give one to Thais as a gift. He is thereby able to enter Thais' house and rape Pamphila. Many scholars have noted how atypical it is in New Comedy that Chaerea rapes Pamphila fully sober and in broad daylight (e.g., Anderson 1984, 130–34; Smith 1994, Pierce 1997, 175; James 1998, 38–40; Rosivach 1998, 13–14; Barsby 1999, 185). Scholars differ on how the audience would have responded to the rape: see Barsby for citations of scholars who maintain a negative view of Chaerea's actions. Germany gives a different reading that serves to acquit Chaerea (2019).

Once Pamphila has been raped, her only recourse is to marry Chaerea, according to the conventions of New Comedy.²⁶ Thais assumes authority over their union, although the betrothal must officially be made by Pamphila's brother Chremes and Chaerea's unnamed father (889–93). But the scene closest to a betrothal is a conversation between Thais and Chaerea (872–93). They come to an agreement after he begs her to be allowed to marry Pamphila: “I entrust and commit myself to your faithfulness; I take you as my patroness, Thais, I beg you. I will die if I don't take her as my wife” (886–88, *ego me tuae commendo et committo fide; / te mihi patronam capio, Thais, te obsecro. / emoriar si non hanc uxorem duxero*). It would have been more usual, however, for Chaerea to petition his own father or the girl's father for her hand in marriage.²⁷ Chaerea also calls Thais his “patroness” (887, *patronam*), which means “female protector” or “female patron” (*OLD* s.v. *patrona*, 1) but is etymologically related to the word *pater*. Chaerea is treating Thais like a father, and she takes on the role, overseeing the marriage as if she were Pamphila's male citizen blood relative, just as Chrysis does for Glycerium in *Andria*. In fact, Chaerea's language is similar to both Chrysis', when she hands Glycerium in pseudo-marriage over to Pamphilus (296, *bona nostra haec tibi permitto et tuae mando fide*, “I entrust this our property to you and I hand it over to your faithfulness”), and to the language describing Melaenis' authority over her foster-daughter Selenium's pseudo-marriage to Alcesimarchus in Plautus' *Cistellaria* (245, *mihi esset commendata et meae fide concredita*, “She was entrusted to me and handed over to my faithfulness”).

²⁶ The easiest way to deal with rape in the ancient world was for the girl in question to marry her rapist, thus preserving her reputation and her family's honor (Porter 1986, 217; Smith 1994, 25; James 1998, 35–38, Pierce 1997, 178).

²⁷ A young man asking a father for permission to marry his daughter is common in Roman comedy (e.g., *Aulularia*, *Poenulus*, *Andria*, *Adelphoe*).

Yet a comparison between *Eunuchus* and *Andria*, which the audience of *Eunuchus* would have been prepared to make,²⁸ points up the difference between Glycerium's and Pamphila's situations. Although their older sisters arranged advantageous marriages for them, Chrysis' unofficial uniting of Pamphilus and Glycerium happens before the action of the play, and, as I have shown above, is based on love, protection, and family bonds between the characters involved. Chrysis' household and relatives honor the bond even after her death. Thais' matter-of-fact deal with Chaerea, in contrast, is based on the distraught state of every woman responsible for Pamphila's care, as well as Pamphila's own distress and absolute lack of options. Pamphila's transition from Thais' unconventional family to her place as Chremes' sister is in fact a transition away from the safety that Thais, Pythias, and Dorias unsuccessfully tried to provide for her. She is marrying the man who violated her, and her transition from Thais' guardianship to Chaerea's is marked by fear and sadness—as scholars have shown, *Eunuchus* more than any other play of Terence forces the audience to consider the terror and violation of rape.²⁹ Pythias describes finding Pamphila miserable, with her clothes and hair torn: “After he tricked her, he ripped all the clothes of the miserable girl, and then he tore at her hair” (645–46, *postquam ludificatust virginem, / vestem omnem miserae discidit, tum ipsam capillo conscidit*). She was also crying and unable to talk about the trauma: “The girl herself is crying, and when you keep asking her,

²⁸ Penwill (2004) discusses how Terence's audience would have interpreted his second play, *Hecyra*, in light of his first, *Andria*. *Eunuchus*, as the fourth of Terence's plays (performed April 161 BCE) could have been interpreted in light of any of Terence's earlier plays, including *Andria* (performed in 166 BCE), as I argue. Although there is some debate over the actual dates and order of Terence's plays (Penwill 2004, 130, 130n.7; Forehand 1985, 9–12), in any chronology *Andria* comes first.

²⁹ For a discussion of how Terence makes the rapes committed by Chaerea in *Eunuchus* and Pamphilus in *Hecyra* particularly distressing, see James (1998). These violations are atypical of Roman comedy in that they are exceedingly violent and marked by outraged responses, especially from women. As a result, a portion of the audience might have been discomfited and provoked to think critically about these rapes (James 1998, 35–46; Smith 1994).

she doesn't dare to say what's going on" (659, *virgo ipsa lacrumat neque quom rogites quid sit audet dicere*).

Pamphila makes a simultaneous transition, then, out of her unconventional, all-female foster family into her two new citizen families (natal family and new husband's family), both comprised entirely of men.³⁰ Her circumstances were likely to have provoked discomfort at least among a part of the audience³¹ about the value of traditional, male-oriented citizen family bonds over those based on mutual trust, benefit, and love.³² Although Thais, vulnerable as a non-citizen woman running a household, was well-intentioned in trying to return Pamphila to her citizen relatives, Terence's play suggests that it might have been better for her not to encounter these men at all. Indeed, men have trafficked Pamphila her whole life: pirates kidnapped her (110, 114–15); a merchant gave her to Thais' mother (108–109); after Thais' mother died, her greedy brother sold Pamphila to Thraso (131–35); and Thraso bought her as gift for Thais (135–36). Even during the play, she is transferred to Thais' house (282); engaged to Chaerea (1036)³³; and Thraso attempts to seize her, resulting in a struggle over her possession between Thraso and Chremes (771–816). In contrast, non-citizen women consistently try to provide her with safety: not just Thais, but Thais' mother, who raised her as a daughter until her death (108–117), and the enslaved women in Thais' household.³⁴

³⁰ Note that Thais' mother adopted Pamphila as a child, as Chrysis' father adopted Glycerium in *Andria*; further, Thais has no male slaves. Her household is markedly all-female. In contrast, there are no women from Chaerea's family mentioned in the play.

³¹ Perhaps among Smith's "more reflective portion of the audience" (1994, 30).

³² James makes the similar point that Terence's disturbing rape scenes "deliver a powerful critique of the coercive, self-centered masculine sexuality that characterizes Roman marriage" (1998, 46).

³³ Indeed, Chaerea mentions "possessing" Pamphila multiple times (319, 361, 614) (James 1998, 39).

³⁴ Thais' mother was not a citizen in Rhodes, where she lived. She can thus be added to the total of

These enslaved women are outraged by Chaerea's rape of Pamphila, to the point of attempted violence. Pythias, who feels genuine affection for Pamphila (916), is charged by Thais to take special care of her (505–506). As Pythias explains, she never would have allowed the eunuch (Chaerea in disguise) near the girl if she thought he could rape her (665–67), and when she finds out what happened, she wants to find and attack the rapist (643–48). Pythias cannot protect Pamphila from Chaerea, as she has no reason to suspect the eunuch entering their household, but she is Pamphila's fiercest and angriest avenger once she learns what happened.

Both Pythias and Thais respond to Chaerea's violation of their protection with anger.³⁵ Pythias is eager to accuse Chaerea, but, for Pamphila's sake, Thais must subdue Pythias and strike up a marriage agreement with Chaerea. Thais thus cannot express anger directly to Chaerea, but focuses her anger and blame on Pythias instead, an emotional expression that does not jeopardize Pamphila's future (817–39). Pythias, though, has nothing to lose by playing a trick on Parmeno, an enslaved member of Chaerea's household, to get him and Chaerea in trouble. As she deceives him, she takes on the role of the enslaved trickster (*servus callidus*) at the same time Parmeno fails at it.³⁶ Traditionally in New Comedy (especially in Plautus' work), this male figure masterminds the young man's success in deceiving his father and obtaining the girl he loves. The opposite occurs here, as Pythias tricks Parmeno into both revealing Chaerea's misdeed to his father and getting him in trouble for it. Pythias' own words show how she has disrupted his role: "By God, I've never seen nor will I see a more stupid man ... Before, I even thought you were a clever and articulate guy (1009–11, *numquam pol hominem stultiorem vidi*

disadvantaged women who make sacrifices for Pamphila's sake.

³⁵ For a full discussion of Pythias and Thais' outraged response to the rape of Pamphila, see James (1998, 41–45).

³⁶ For a discussion of this role reversal see Sharrock (2009, 93) and Karakasis (2013, 213).

nec videbo ... at etiam primo callidum et disertum credidi hominem). Her denial that Parmeno is *callidus* shows how far he has failed in his role, and, in contrast, how successful Pythias has been in usurping it.

Although Pythias cannot hope to make up for the trauma Chaerea inflicted on her household, she can at least avenge the wrong he has done not only to Pamphila, but to their whole household (941–50). She is consistently angry and indignant: “I’m barely holding myself back from flying toward your hair, you monster! And even more, he has come to deride us gratuitously” (859–60, *vix me contineo quin inuolem in / capillum, monstrum! etiam ultro derisum advenit*). Pythias’ repeated avowal that she will not let her household go unavenged, after being mocked and deceived, resembles Melaenis’ anger in *Cistellaria* when she perceives Alcesimarchus as having harmed her and made a fool of her daughter (500–503). Both women consider their households, even if led by *meretrices* and composed of adoptive relationships, to be important units, deserving dignity and respect.

Pythias’ use of the word “monster” (859, *monstrum*) plays into a pattern of wildly different priorities between disadvantaged women and citizen men in the play. The four uses of the word throughout the play neatly differentiate the outlooks of the characters.³⁷ The enslaved women Pythias and Dorias both think that rape and rapists are monstrous (859, *monstrum*; 656, *monstri*). Phaedria is somewhat on the same page, but mistaken, when he presumes that the true eunuch Dorus has raped Pamphila and calls him “a monster of a man” (696, *monstrum hominis*). Chaerea’s perspective shows his skewed values. He thinks that being waylaid by an elderly

³⁷ Barsby notes three of these different uses of *monstrum*, to make the point that the word can refer to a person or a deed, but makes no more of the connection (1999, ad 334).

family friend is “like something monstrous” (334, *monstri similest*), but shows no compunction nor remorse about the rape he commits.³⁸

The men in *Eunuchus* participate in a consistent pattern of mistakenly blaming and disregarding the women in the play.³⁹ Phaedria, as noted, mistrusts Thais (79–80, 158–59, 175–77), and treats Pythias with the same unfounded suspicion. When she tries to tell him that Pamphila was raped, he suspects she is drunk and insane (665, 657). Even after Dorus and Pythis both try to convince him of the truth, he does not believe them, despite, as Pythias points out, evidence to the contrary: “The situation itself is the proof” (705, *res ipsa indicat*). Even the father of Phaedria and Chaerea, who comes on stage at the end of the play, has a long-lasting grudge against Thais’ household: as Parmeno remarks, “I’m pleased because I’m about to bring something bad to these women. For a long time now the old man has been looking for some reason to do something distinctive to them; now he has found it” (998–1001, *id gaudeo / propter me hisce aliquid esse eventurum mali. / nam iamdiu aliquam causam quaerebat senex / quam ob rem insigne aliquid faceret eis; nunc repperit*).

Parmeno, too, strongly distrusts Thais at the beginning of the play (67–70), and Phaedria believes him (70–71).⁴⁰ Although the action and outcome of the play show that Thais does not act as all these men suspect of her (e.g., Phaedria, Parmeno, and Chremes), near the end Parmeno makes a speech that shows he has not corrected his misjudgments (923–40). He calls her “greedy” (927, *avara*) and generalizes about the bad character of *meretrices* (932, *meretricum*

³⁸ Barsby mentions that Chaerea shows “barely a shred of guilt” (1999, 185). I discuss his lack of remorse further below.

³⁹ Compare Terence’s *Hecyra*, in which all the married men in the play blame their wives, and all are mistaken (Slater 1988).

⁴⁰ Parmeno is also distrustful and hostile at 87–88, 98, 108, 121–23, and 129 (Barsby 1999, 101, ad 129).

ingenia meretricum ingenia), saying that although they appear to be elegant and refined outdoors, they live in filth within their houses, and that he has done Chaerea a service by teaching him to “hate them forever” (932, *perpetuo oderit*). “Seeing their dirt, filth, poverty, how they are dishonorable alone at home and greedy for food ... knowing all these things is safety for young men” (937–38, *harum videre illuviem sordes inopiam, / quam inhonestae solae sint domi atque avidae cibi ... nosse omnia haec salus est adolescentulis*).⁴¹

Yet Parmeno’s interpretation is directly at odds with the picture of the *meretrix*’s household that Chaerea, who actually enters Thais’ house during the play, describes. Parmeno mentions the dirt and filth of the houses of *meretrices*, but in Chaerea’s brief experience in Thais’ inner rooms (579, *in interiore parte*), he witnesses multiple members of the household washing themselves: young enslaved women get Pamphila’s bath ready (582), then Pamphila bathes (592–93), and the other girls tell Chaerea that they are heading off to bathe and that he can do the same once they finish (595–96). The baths attest to the intimate access Chaerea has gained to Thais’ household, and to the violation of their domestic space and of Pamphila herself that he is committing.⁴² But the repeated references to bathing in particular also point up that Parmeno is not only wrong about what *meretrices* do in their houses, but about what Chaerea has learned from his experience. He witnessed the opposite of what Parmeno wanted him to, and—far from cultivating a perpetual hatred—he ends up engaged to Pamphila and praising Thais

⁴¹ Although Parmeno characterizes all *meretrices* as “greedy” (937, *avidae*), the only other character in the play who is described as such is Thais’ uncle, whose mercenariness led him to sell Pamphila into slavery (131, *avidior*).

⁴² Philippides (1995) discusses how the bathing scene also contains elements of a Roman wedding ritual, following Donatus’ 4th-century CE commentary. She concludes that the elements of wedding ritual in the scene would make the audience sympathetic to Chaerea (284). James adds that bathing is a customary courtesy to a traveler upon arrival, but that the elements of marriage ritual are linked to Terence’s criticism of the connection between rape and marriage in Rome, and do not absolve Chaerea (1998, 40n.37).

(1036–52). Furthermore, the gist of Parmeno’s speech decries *meretrices* for putting on an appearance that belies their true nature and thus tricking men (934–40), but it was Parmeno himself who came up with the idea to dress Chaerea in a costume that disguised his masculinity and allowed him to play a dangerous trick on the household of a *meretrix* (369–75).

The most significant misjudgment in the play, however, is the censure against the *audacia* of *meretrices* that both Chremes and Parmeno articulate.⁴³ The concept of illicit boldness and effrontery comes up for the first time in Chremes’ speech about Thais’ ulterior motives (525, *audacia*), which I discussed above as an example of male misjudgment. At the end of the play, Parmeno still believes in the effrontery of *meretrices* (994, *audaciam meretricum*). The climactic action of the play, though, proves both men wrong. Four times, by three different people (including Chaerea himself), Chaerea’s rape of Pamphila is referred to with a word related to *audacia*. When Pythias discovers what Chaerea has done, she cries out, “This man was bold enough to do such a bold deed!” (644, *hocin tam audax facinus facere esse ausum!*). The chiasmic *figura etymologica* of her line draws attention to the fact of Chaerea’s daring. She refers to Chaerea’s effrontery again as she tries to convince Thais not to let him marry Pamphila (900, *audaciam*), and she also calls Parmeno “very bold” (948, *audacissime*), likely in reference to his plan to disguise Chaerea. Phaedria calls his brother “a wicked and bold man” (709, *scelestum atque audacem hominem*) when he finds out about his crime. Although Chaerea assures Thais and Pythias he “wouldn’t be so bold” (884, *non ausim*) as to hurt Thais if they let him marry Pamphila, at the very end of the play, the final time the concept comes up, Chaerea states that he feels no remorse for daring to do what he has done. In fact, he is overjoyed: “What should I

⁴³ Barsby likens Chremes’ disbelief of Thais to Parmeno’s, and adds that “Chremes’ chief characteristic is his suspiciousness of Thais’ motives” and “his language to Pythias is brusque to the point of rudeness” (1999, 178).

commemorate first or praise most? He who gave me the idea to do it, or myself, who dared to take it on?” (1044–45, *quid commemorem primum aut laudem maxime? / illumne qui mi dedit consilium ut facerem, an me qui id ausu’ sim?*). On the other hand, Pythias and Pamphila are both marked as *not* daring: Pamphila is too afraid to say what happened to her outright (659, *neque ... audet*), and Pythias exclaims that she “wouldn’t dare” (905, *neque ... ausim*) let Chaerea protect anything.⁴⁴

In sum, then, Thais’ household of underprivileged women—comprised of herself, Pamphila, Pythias, Dorias, other enslaved workers, and previously Thais’ mother and a nurse—can be meaningfully contrasted to the more conventional members of a citizen family, all of whom, in this play, are male. Thais acts as father, mother, and sibling to the young Pamphila, while Pythias plays the role of the enslaved trickster. The link between the families is Pamphila, who transitions out of her female-led unconventional family into a male-led citizen family over the course of the play. Pamphila moves from being Thais’ sister and a 16-year-old *virgo* to being Chremes’ blood sister and Chaerea’s wife.⁴⁵ The centrality of her status is stressed by the constant reference to it by all the characters in the play: she is called a *virgo* 36 times throughout, significantly more than any other young woman in Terence’s plays.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Thraso is the only exception to this pattern, who “didn’t dare” (619, *neque ... audere*) refuse Thais what she wants. Thraso’s inability to stand up to her, expressed through his lack of daring, is emasculating: he does not possess the aggressive male sexuality that Chaerea displays in excess (James 1998, 44–46).

⁴⁵ Pamphila’s youth is unusually prominent in the play: only two other Roman comedies (*Cist.* 755, *Ph.* 1017–18) provide the age of the young girl (Barsby 1999, ad 318), but Pamphila’s is in fact given twice (318, 526).

⁴⁶ The closest runner-up, with 17 uses, is *Adelphoe*, which stages another young citizen woman at high risk, as her rapist and the father of her child has seemingly abandoned her (*An.*: 2, *HT.*: 1, *Hec.*: 6, *Ph.*: 7). Barsby notes that the repeated references to Pamphila as a *virgo* might be a hint to the audience of her freeborn status (1999, ad 132), and that “she is seen as a type rather than an individual,” as her name is only used six times (ad 440). Brown also discusses the frequent occurrence of the word in this play as a clue for the audience about Pamphila’s status (1993, 232–34). Watson notes that, unusually, Pamphila is

The most obvious contrast between the families, and the one with the greatest consequence, is the difference between Thais and Pythias' fierce protection of Pamphila, and Chaerea's violation of that protection and of their household itself, a violation that eventually makes him Pamphila's long-term possessor, in his own language.⁴⁷ The play's resolution, then, questions the value that Roman society places on citizenship (enacted in the play as Pamphila's citizen status is restored) and on male authority, especially within the family. The network of non-citizen women, not related by blood, who share Thais' household and try to protect Pamphila, are family members with her best interest at heart, while the citizen men in the play repeatedly mischaracterize and mistrust the women. Terence's depiction of Pamphila's two contrasting families creates a sense of hopelessness, as she turns out to be safe and happy in neither environment. In so doing, he stages a critique of the power of men in Roman family and society.

Cistellaria

Melaenis and Selenium's relationship in Plautus' *Cistellaria* is similar to the relationships between Thais and Pamphila, and Chrysis and Glycerium. In this regard, it is worth noting that all three plays are based on Menander's works—usual for Terence, but somewhat unusual for Plautus. Perhaps the shared background of the three plays accounts for some of their similarities.

referred to as *virgo* even by those who do not know her citizen origin (1983, 120–23). The repeated use of *virgo* not only hints at her status, but prompts the audience to focus on her change of status and the suffering that change entails.

⁴⁷ As James notes, Chaerea “speaks several times of possessing Pamphila, using the verb *potior* (319, 361, 614), which elides rape and ownership” (1998a, 39).

Although these relationships echo one another in many respects, Plautus takes up issues of motherhood in more depth than Terence does.⁴⁸

Like Chrysis and Thais, Melaenis is a *meretrix*, now retired, who raises and protects a young citizen girl at risk after having been separated from her birth mother, who is free and upper-class. Selenium's birth mother had her exposed, as she was illegitimate, a child of rape, expecting the child to die (157–66). Melaenis' friend, an unnamed *lena*,⁴⁹ rescued the baby and passed her on to her friend, who received her *pro filia* (172). The speaker of the postponed prologue, Auxilium, describes what a good mother Melaenis was to her foundling adopted daughter (170–73):

ut eampse vos audistis confiterier, dat eam puellam meretrici Melaenidi, eaque educavit eam sibi pro filia bene ac pudice.	170
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Just as you heard her confess herself, she gives the girl to the *meretrix* Melaenis, who raised her as her daughter, well and chastely.

In Auxilium's account, Melaenis raised Selenium without using her to make a profit, just as Chrysis and Thais behave toward their charges in Terence's plays.⁵⁰ In fact, her account is corroborated by the opening of the play, in which Selenium herself discusses her fidelity (83–85):

⁴⁸ In *Cistellaria* and *Truculentus*, Plautus deals at length with the issue of non-biological and adoptive motherhood; biological mother-daughter relationships are explored in *Cistellaria* and *Asinaria*. Relationships between citizen mothers and their children are staged in many plays, but are not relevant to this chapter; see James (2015) or a discussion.

⁴⁹ Like *Matrona* in *Menaechmi* and *Virgo* in *Persa*, the *lena* in *Cistellaria* has no given name. I refer to her throughout as simply "Lena."

⁵⁰ Gilula disagrees, considering Melaenis to be purely financially motivated (2004, 242–46), as does Slater (2004, 271). Melaenis' plan to raise an adopted daughter (143–44) has been compared to Phronesium's motives in *Truculentus*; see, e.g., Chiarini (2004, 118), Fantham (2004a, 225), Gilula (2004, 242–43).

nam mea mater, quia ego nolo me meretricem dicier,
opsecuta est, gessit morem oranti morigerae mihi
ut me, quem ego amarem graviter, sineret cum eo vivere.

Because my mother, when I didn't want to be called a *meretrix*, accommodated me, obeyed me, when I was begging her and being obedient, so that she allowed me to live with that man whom I love deeply.

Selenium also confirms that she has been intimate only with Alcesimarchus (86–88). These redundant accounts assure the audience that Melaenis is protecting Selenium's fidelity in accordance with the girl's own desires, and at a financial cost to herself, like Chrysis in *Andria*. Melaenis even acts in Selenium's interest at an emotional cost, eventually returning her to her family of origin: "Although I'm reluctant to be separated from you, I'll bring myself to look after your interests rather than my own" (633–34, *quamquam inuita te carebo, animum ego inducam tamen / ut illud <quod minus meam> quam tuam in rem bene conducat consulam*).⁵¹

Melaenis, however, is different from Chrysis and Thais: she is Selenium's foster mother, rather than her foster sister. Thus she can be compared to other mother figures in Plautus' plays, and Plautus invites his viewers to do so by the way he stages her counterpart and close friend, Lena, and Lena's daughter Gymnasium, Selenium's good friend.⁵² The four women are close, and look out for each other, just as the female members of *meretrices'* households look out for each other in Terence's plays. In fact, these lower-class women have created a family of sorts among themselves. The play opens with Selenium's discussion of their bonds (1–5):

⁵¹ As Stockert notes, Melaenis is explicit that this action goes against her will and represents a loss (2012, ad 633). Konstan calls her sacrifice "a noble act" (1983, 107), and points out that Melaenis also confronts Alcesimarchus at length (450–527) about his faithless treatment of Selenium (1983, 103–104). Dutsch reads her sacrifice as contributing to the subversive identities of stock characters in the play: Melaenis acts nobly even though she will not turn out to be a citizen at the end of the play (2019, 210).

⁵² Stockert discusses the contrast between Selenium and Gymnasium, along with the attitude of Lena (2012, 32), as does Konstan (1983, 97–114) and Fantham (2004a, 241). Dutsch considers the complexities of social class, citizenship, and individual personality among the four women (2019, 206–11).

quom ego antidhac te amaui et mi amicam esse creui, 1
 mea Gymnasium, et matrem tuam, tum id mihi hodie
 aperuistis, tu atque haec: soror si mea esses,
 qui magis potueritis mi honorem ire habitum,
 nescio. 5

I've loved you up until now and I've considered you my friend, my Gymnasium, and your mother, and today you have shown this to me, you and she: if you were my sister, I don't know how you would have been able to have more regard for me.

In the first lines of the play, Selenium explicitly compares their bonds to those between sisters. She considers Gymnasium and Lena her family, just like Melaenis, whom she believes at this point to be her biological mother.

Lena also discusses the importance and strength of the bonds between the women, although rather than viewing their relationships in terms of family, she uses the language of social class (23–28):

deceat pol, mea Selenium,
 hunc esse ordinem beneuolentis inter se
 beneque amicitia utier, 25
 ubi istas uideas summo genere gnatas, summatis matronas,
 ut amicitiam colunt atque ut eam iunctam bene habent inter se.
 si idem istuc nos faciamus, si [idem] imitemur, ita tamen uix uiuimus
 cum inuidia summa.

Gosh, my Selenium, it's fitting that our class of people act kindly toward one another and enjoy kind friendship, when you see those born to the highest class, the noblest married women, how they cultivate friendship and they have it joined well to one another. If we act like them, if we imitate them, then we live, although barely, and with greatest ill-regard.

According to Lena, *meretrices* must treat each other with friendship, as married women do, in order to survive. She places the same value as Selenium does on strong relationships between marginalized women. Indeed, her actions bear out her opinion, both before and during the play. She brought Selenium to Melaenis in order to do help her friend deceive a lover (133), and she brought her daughter into her profession only for their financial stability and survival

(40–41). She cares deeply about Gymnasium (567), and about Selenium too, whom she allows Gymnasium to help, even at a financial cost to herself and her daughter (106–107).

Gymnasium too is strongly attached to her friend, and begs her to tell her how she can help (53–58).

Lena’s discussion of upper-class women at the opening of the play primes the audience to consider the relationships between these four lower-class women in terms of those between upper-class women. Selenium contributes further to this comparison, describing her relationship with her mother in language that recasts family relationships. Selenium and her mother have a reciprocal relationship based on mutual respect, rather than parental authority and filial obedience. As she tells it, Melaenis “obeys” (*gessit morere*) Selenium because Selenium is “obedient” (*morigerae*) to her (84). The verb and the adjective both are technical terms denoting proper obedience to authority, particularly within a married relationship: a wife should be *morigera* to her husband. These terms are also used, albeit less frequently, to express the obedience a child should show to a parent.⁵³ Selenium’s use of this word hints at her freeborn status, which will be revealed at the end of the play (Konstan 1983, 110). But it is especially notable that her mother is obedient to her in return, as a mother is not obliged to respect her children (even her biological children) under any Roman system of values. Melaenis and Selenium’s relationship is based not only on freeborn values but also on mutual respect, much like the ideal for *meretrices* that Lena discussed earlier.

Selenium’s description is especially applicable to married women, as *morigera* is often

⁵³ For a discussion of the valence of *morigera* and related words, and their use in Roman comedy, see Williams (1958, 19–29), Braund (2005, 44–46).

used of a wife's duty to her husband.⁵⁴ The connection between wives and *meretrices* is highlighted by Lena's second comparison of the two social classes, preceding Selenium's account. When she remarks that she wants to spend her life with Alcesimarchus (77), Lena dissuades her (78–81):

matronae magis conducibile est istuc, mea Selenium,
unum amare et cum eo aetatem exigere quoi nupta est semel,
verum enim meretrix fortunati est oppidi simillum: 80
non potest suam rem optinere sola sine multis viris.

That is more advantageous to a married woman, my Selenium, to love one man and to spend her life with that man once she is married. But indeed a *meretrix* is most similar to a thriving town: it's not possible for her to maintain her livelihood without many men.

Lena's comparison of married women to *meretrices* sets up Selenium's use of *morem gerere* and *morigera* in the next lines. Contrary to the difference between married women and *meretrices* that Lena has now articulated twice, Selenium places herself and her mother in a reciprocal citizen relationship like those in a legitimate family, governed by *pietas*.

Gymnasium and her mother do not have a reciprocal relationship discussed in terms of citizen values, as Melaenis and Selenium do. They do, however, work together toward a shared goal of financial stability. When Lena points out the Gymnasium must "marry" a man every day and night in order not to starve (43–45, quoted below), she replies, "I need to be just the way you want me to, mother" (46, *nesesse est quo tu modo voles esse ita esse, mater*). Gymnasium also hopes to oblige her mother by staying forever young and profitable (47–51), and swears that she will be happy to help her mother achieve this impossible goal: "Yes, by God, I'll attend to that carefully" (52, *equidem hercle addam opera sedulo*).⁵⁵

⁵⁴ As Fantham notes, "Although the epithet may evoke Selenium's dutiful obedience to her mother, it may also allude to her wifely behavior toward her partner Alcesimarchus" (2004a, 224n.8).

⁵⁵ Fantham calls her "a loyal and obedient daughter" (2004a, 223).

Gymnasium also obtains her mother’s permission before she helps Selenium (104–105), and asks her mother twice if she wants anything before she leaves (117, 119). Like Selenium, Gymnasium obeys and respects her mother; in turn, her mother looks out for her, and they both provide for their household. Besides teaching her daughter to make a living, Lena also weeps at the threat of her being taken away (567–69).

To an extent, Lena in *Cistellaria* is even in charge of her daughter’s marriage, like the other *meretrices* I discuss, but with a humorous twist. When Selenium tells her that she should have had Glycerium marry rather than become a *meretrix* (42), Lena responds that she has done so (42–45):

... heia!
 haec quidem ecastor cottidie viro nubit, nupsitque hodie,
 nubet mox noctu: numquam ego hanc viduam cubare sivi.
 nam si haec non nubat, lugubri fame familia pereat. 45

Ha! Indeed, by god, she marries a man every day, and she married one today, soon she’ll marry tonight: I’ve never allowed her to sleep alone. If she didn’t marry, our household would be destroyed, from grievous hunger.

Lena’s description of the profession of a *meretrix* as a series of marriages is “a joking debasement of marital language and imagery” (James 2012, 432); she goes so far as to refer to Selenium’s nights spent without a customer as a form of widowhood (44, *vidua*) (Stockert 2012, ad 43).⁵⁶ Yet Lena is still a mother with the power of a father over her daughter, at least in terms of marriage. Although the circumstances are entirely different, Lena too makes decisions about her daughter’s “marriage” on behalf of the household; in fact, her family’s survival is directly related to her authority over her daughter’s sexual role.⁵⁷ Despite her

⁵⁶ The adjective used here for “alone,” *viduus*, can also mean “deprived of” or “bereft” in general, but the primary meaning is that of a person who is lacking or has lost a spouse (OLD s.v. *uiduus*).

⁵⁷ The *lena* Cleareta in Plautus’ *Asinaria* can be compared here, as her authority over the sexual availability of her daughter is explicitly expressed as a form of *patria potestas* (505–509). For a

non-citizen status, financial disadvantage, and the joking nature of her words, she bears the responsibilities of the traditional Roman father.

Melaenis' authority over Selenium's marriage, however, is much more serious and similar to Chrysis' and Thais' roles as heads of household in Terence's plays. Although Selenium does not know she is freeborn, she and Alcesimarchus discuss their bond using the language of *iustum coniugium*, and Melaenis has authority over the vows.⁵⁸ As Selenium reports, Alcesimarchus cultivated Melaenis' friendship as he pursued her (92), then swore "formally before my mother that he would make me his wife" (98–99, *ille conceptis iuravit verbis apud matrem meam / me uxorem ducturum esse*).⁵⁹ When Alcesimarchus laments over his separation from Selenium, he says she swore an oath to him (241), planned to marry him (243), and that she "was entrusted to me and handed over to my faithfulness" (245, *mihi esset commendata et meae fide concredita*). Melaenis is the only person who would have entrusted Selenium to Alcesimarchus. Gymnasium also sees her as the authoritative figure over their union, as she advises Alcesimarchus to end the separation by swearing an oath to Melaenis (301–303), as well as by apologizing to her, persuading her, and flattering her.

consideration of the two *lenae*, see Hartkamp (2004) and Dutsch (2019, 203–11). Melaenis can be considered a *lena*, but she has very different priorities from the typical *lena* (Dutsch 2019, 206–11).

⁵⁸ Alcesimarchus and Selenium could not be legitimately married until she is discovered to be an appropriate match (105, 109), but Melaenis, as well as the couple, considers them exclusively bound (101), and expects Alcesimarchus to honor his obligation despite the difference in their social class. For discussion of Selenium's legal status, see Fantham (1975, 58–59; 2004a, 231–32), Chiarini (2004, 119), Brown (2005).

⁵⁹ The formula indicating Alcesimarchus' oath contains traditional marriage language (James 2012, 431). Young men and their beloveds in Roman comedy often use the language of marriage and monogamous commitment to each other, even when the girl in question is not eligible or not yet known to be eligible. For example, as noted above, Pamphilus of *Andria* considers Glycerium "as a wife" (146, 273, *pro uxore*). See James for examples in comedy, including Phronesium and Stratophanes in *Truculentus*, Antiphila and Clinia in *HT*, Alcesimarchus and Selenium in *Cistellaria*, Pasicompsa and Charinus in *Mercator*, the marriage between enslaved people in *Casina*, and examples of exclusive concubinage in *Miles Gloriosus*, *Epidicus*, and *Bacchides* (2012, 430–33).

Finally, when Melaenis and Alcesimarchus argue over his treatment of Selenium, she swears that the gods should kill her “if I ever give my daughter to you as a wife” (499, *si umquam tibi uxorem filiam dedero meam*). The verb *do* combined with “a daughter or ward” means “to give in marriage” (OLD s.v. *do*, 4a), and the formula is used elsewhere in Roman comedy of both conventional (*Aul.* 271, *Ad.* 346) and unconventional betrothals (*Cas.* 288), including Chrysis’ use of the phrase in her pseudo-marriage of Pamphilus to Glycerium (*An.* 295, 297). Melaenis, Chrysis, and Thais share an authority in their families comparable to that of a traditional Roman citizen father, seen most obviously when they assume the responsibility for the marriage of their female charges.

When Alcesimarchus’ father forces him (101, *eum pater eius subegit*) into a legitimate marriage to a relative (99–101), Melaenis takes it upon herself to confront the young man, just as Chrysis, Thais, and enslaved members of their households protect and act on behalf of the lost girls in their charge. Although his father has betrothed him to someone else, Alcesimarchus pleads with Melaenis and Selenium to allow him to become a part of their family. He refers to Selenium as the “little woman” (450, *issula*) of his house, indicating that she is his wife.⁶⁰ When Selenium rejects this approach (450), he tries a different family relationship, calling her “my true little sister” (451, *germana mea sororcula*). The terms *soror* and *frater* are used in later Latin for lovers (de Melo 2011, 177, James 2006, 232n.35). But particularly revealing here is Alcesimarchus’ use of the word *germana*, which would indicate that Selenium is his sister by birth. The adjective emphasizes the strength of his feelings for her and his deep desire to be part of her family. At the same time, however, the

⁶⁰ His choice of words at the end of this line, if genuine, further show that he is asking Selenium to act as his wife—he asks for permission to “lead her off” (450, *sine ducam*). The phrase *uxorem duco* is a standard way to refer to marriage (OLD *duco*, 5). These particular words, though, were supplied by an editor, as the play is fragmentary here.

word shows his mischaracterization of family relationships.

Selenium rejects Alcesimarchus' plea for true siblinghood with a matching diminutive: "I reject you as my little brother" (451, *repudio te fraterculum*). He then turns to Melaenis, pleading with her as his "little mother" (452, *mea matercula*). Melaenis responds in kind with Selenium: "I reject you as my little son" (452, *repudio te puerculum*). The two women, then, respond to Alcesimarchus' pleas with metrically identical rhyming refutations of his role in their family. Especially striking is their use of the word *repudio*, which means either "to reject formally (as a prospective wife or husband)" or "to divorce" (*OLD* s.v. *repudio*, 1).⁶¹ The noun *repudium* is also a technical word either for the rejection of a spouse or for divorce (*OLD* s.v. *repudium*).⁶² Although the diminutive kinship words used in the scene are comical, even affectionate, the technical verb that Selenium and Melaenis use shows that they are serious about rejecting him from their family and cutting the ties of pseudo-marriage that they had honored before.

Once Selenium exits, Melaenis continues to argue with Alcesimarchus, repeatedly questioning his integrity (454, 461, 471, 495, 502). In response, he makes promises and swears by the gods (456, 469–70, 481, 497–99, 512–33). But the basic point that Melaenis reiterates is that she does not trust his oaths—and with good reason, despite the class difference between his family and hers (492–96):

eo facetu's quia tibi alia est sponsa locuples Lemnia.
habeas. nec nos factione tanta quanta tu sumus
neque opes nostrae tam sunt validae quam tuae; verum tamen
hau metuo ne ius iurandum nostrum quisquam culpitet: 495
tu iam, si quid tibi dolebit, scies qua doleat gratia.

⁶¹ The word is used elsewhere in comedy also to mean "reject as a spouse" (*Per.* 384, *Tri.* 455, *Truc.* 706; *An.* 249).

⁶² The word is used elsewhere in comedy to refer to a broken engagement (*Aul.* 783; *Ph.* 928).

You're eloquent because you're engaged to another woman, a wealthy Lemnian. You should have her. We don't come from high society like you do, and we don't have abundant resources, like yours, but even still, I'm not worried that anyone could reproach our oath. As for you, if anything troubles you, you'll know why it does.

Melaenis points out that although Alcesimarchus has far more advantages than her family does, their oath is worth more than his, as he cannot be trusted. She draws yet another of the play's comparisons between *meretrices* and the upper class, and the *meretrices* come out on top.

As the next scene shows, Melaenis is right to question Alcesimarchus' ability both to swear oaths and to be part of her family. In the process of making a renewed oath to Melaenis by swearing to all the gods, Alcesimarchus mixes up the family relationships between the gods and goddesses he invokes, in a highly comical scene. By his account, Juno is the daughter of Jupiter, rather than his wife; Saturn is her paternal uncle, not her father; and Ops is her grandmother, not her mother (512–16). Melaenis corrects him, incredulous that he could make such mistakes about the basic, immediate-family relationships between these four deities (514–15). Her correct understanding of the Roman pantheon proves her earlier statement that her oath carries more weight than Alcesimarchus', despite her inferior social status.

Alcesimarchus' mistakes regarding both human and divine family relationships show that Melaenis and Selenium were right to reject him earlier, as he cannot participate in a functioning family. Melaenis and Selenium correctly understand family, and act with integrity, while Alcesimarchus appears unstable and undependable in both areas. Indeed, Alcesimarchus finishes swearing his oath on a much harsher note, threatening to “mutilate” (524, *optruncavero*), “kill” (525, *occidero*), and “destroy” (526, *efflixero*) both women if Selenium is not returned to him. His comical bumbling changes swiftly to a threat of extreme violence against the women. Despite their functional family, respect for each other, respectable values,

and integrity, Plautus shows that, when push comes to shove, Melaenis and Selenium are still vulnerable to the violent, selfish tendencies of upper-class males.⁶³ Indeed, shortly afterward, when Melaenis begins the process of returning Selenium to her birth family, an armed and angry Alcesimarchus abducts Selenium (639–52). After this point, neither of them returns to the stage. The lack of any visible resolution between the couple reinforces the sense of worry for Selenium that part of the audience might have felt after Alcesimarchus' shabby behavior.

Other Female-Led Households

In Roman comedy, these three plays exhibit the most centrally featured female-led families. But there are more examples throughout the genre, and without exception, the other underprivileged women who run families always put their daughters first. Cleareta in *Asinaria* fits into this pattern, and like Chrysis, Thais, and Melaenis, she takes on the father's role in her small family. As a *lena*, she arranges sex work for her daughter Philaenium, and her priority is the family's financial stability. Unlike Melaenis in *Cistellaria*, she cannot allow Philaenium to be with the young man she loves, Argyrippus. As Philaenium is her biological daughter, there is no chance of her being discovered to have wealthy relatives, so Cleareta knows that there will be no benefit, only financial ruin, to protecting her chastity or indulging her love interest.⁶⁴

Cleareta gets her daughter to comply with her wishes by invoking the language and power of a father's *patria potestas*. She demands that Philaenium obey her authority (505,

⁶³ Similarly, as I discuss above, Terence ends *Eunuchus* with a sense of hopelessness, as despite their best efforts, Thais' household cannot protect Pamphila from Chaerea's violence.

⁶⁴ Dutsch gives a thorough analysis of the *lenae* in both *Cistellaria* and *Asinaria*, in which she points out that the *lenae* are forced, because of their financial situation, to act differently from upper-class mothers who seek out monogamous marriage for their daughters (2019, 203–211).

matris imperio; 509, *imperium matris*) and acts with absolute power over her daughter's body. She and Philaenium both invoke the respectable value of filial *pietas* as the correct way for the daughter to act towards the mother (507, *piem Pietatem*; 509, *pietatem*).⁶⁵ Their relationship, moreover, is cast not like Melaenis and Selenium's reciprocal relationship but more along the lines of the power imbalance inherent in the citizen father-child relationship. Indeed, later in the play, *pietas* motivates Argyrippus to allow his *senex amator* father to claim the first night with Philaenium for himself (831). As Konstan notes, the son's use of *pietas* is ironic in this context, as "it is not the duty of the son to promote his father's debaucheries" (1983, 54).

Plautus' use of the vocabulary of Roman paternal authority for both parent-child relationships in this play prompts the audience to compare them, just as the two parent-child relationships of his *Cistellaria* can be compared. Although Demaenetus is the only character in the play with the legal authority of *patria potestas*, he uses his power irresponsibly and reprehensibly to his son's disadvantage, but for his own gain: access to a young *meretrix* (who is not at all interested in his affections). On the other hand, although Cleareta is far from kindly or indulgent, she uses her authority to protect her daughter and secure her future as best she can, as it is only with the profits from Philaenium's work as a *meretrix* that their family can survive and that her daughter will have money to live on once she is no longer desirable to men.

In *Truculentus*, two generations of women, free and enslaved, work together for their own benefit as well as that of the young upper-class girl in the play, the daughter of Callicles. In order to disguise that the young respectable woman in the play has become pregnant following a rape, her mother allows the *meretrix* Phronesium to use the girl's newborn baby in a scheme to deceive Phronesium's lover, the soldier Stratophanes, into thinking Phronesium has borne him a

⁶⁵Konstan discusses how the moral virtue of filial piety in this scene is perverted, as Cleareta is motivated by greed and profit (1983, 54). Sutton also notes the use of *pietas* here (1993, 95).

son.⁶⁶ A network of women participates in this double deception, including Phronesium herself, the *ancilla* of Callicles who gave away the baby (790); Callicles' wife (796); Phronesium's mother (799–800); Phronesium's slave Astaphium, who assists her throughout; and other slave-women in Phronesium's and her mother's households (401–409, 476–81, 791).⁶⁷ In so doing, these women are like Pythias and Dorias looking out for Pamphila in *Eunuchus*, and Mysis and other women who assist Glycerium in *Andria*. Although neither of the households in *Truculentus* is a female-led family along the same lines as the ones in *Eunuchus*, *Andria*, *Cistellaria*, or *Asinaria* (i.e., led by a female and in charge of a young woman), these women of multiple households and statuses cooperate both to construct Phronesium's fake family with the baby and the soldier (discussed in more detail in Chapter Four) and to protect the young girl at risk.

Another group of women who follow the pattern of protecting vulnerable girls are single or disadvantaged mothers who are not *meretrices* or *lenae*. These women include Philippa in *Epidicus*, Phanium's mother in *Phormio*, and Sostrata in *Adelphoe*. In *Epidicus*, Philippa raises her daughter Telestis after being raped and abandoned in her youth by Periphanes, an old man at the time of the play. She is committed to finding Telestis and getting her back once she is taken captive in war, traveling to Athens in search of her. In *Phormio*, Phanium's mother, a citizen of

⁶⁶ I discuss Phronesium and Stratophanes' relationship in detail in Chapter Four. Phronesium's false pregnancy to deceive a foreign lover makes her similar to Melaenis in *Cistellaria* (133–44) (Fantham 2004a, 225; Chiarini 2004, 118; Gilula 2004, 242–43). Her situation gives Plautus another opportunity to explore motherhood, in Phronesium's view (448–81) and other characters' (805–11). On these discussion of motherhood in the play, see Dutsch (2008, 112–118) and Hofmann (2001, ad 809). The language of pregnancy and childbirth suffuses the play, and is even applied to inanimate objects and concepts (95–98, 517).

⁶⁷ Diniarchus, too, is in on the deceit during much of the play (Konstan 1983, 159). For the identification of *ancillae* with the situation of their female owners, see Dutsch (2008, 118–122). The enslaved women who assist in Philumena's childbirth in *Hecyra*, and the enslaved nurse Staphyla in *Aulularia*, act similarly to help respectable young women hide the fact that they have suffered rape.

Lemnos, is married to Chremes, but she does not know that theirs is a bigamous second marriage. When he fails to arrange a marriage for their daughter, this Lemnian wife travels to Athens with their daughter and her daughter's nurse to find him and force him to do right by the girl. Like Chrysis in *Andria*, she takes it upon herself to step up when citizen men fail to take responsibility for the women in their families. She dies without finding Chremes, because he has given her a false name. After her mother's death, just as Mysis in *Andria* honors Chrysis' efforts to protect Glycerium and secure her future, Phanium's enslaved nurse takes on the task of protecting her according to her mother's wishes, doing her best to keep her chastity intact so she can make a legitimate marriage (113–16).

In Terence's *Adelphoe*, Sostrata is a widow living with her daughter and at least two enslaved members of the household, Geta and Canthara. The household relies on the protection of citizen men. As Canthara puts it, with Sostrata's agreement, they are lucky that Pamphila was raped by a young man upstanding enough to do right by her: "Although she was violated, it's best that such a man was involved, of such birth and spirit, born from such a great family" (296–97, *quando vitium oblatumst, quod ad illum attinet potissimum, / talem, tali genere atque animo, natum ex tanta familia*). When their household thinks that Aeschinus has abandoned them, their complete lack of resources without him is a disaster, as Geta puts it: "How suddenly things besiege us on all sides, and we can't escape, violence, poverty, injustice, loneliness, disgrace!" (302–303, *tot res repente circumvallant se unde emergi non potest, / vis, egestas, iniustitia, solitudo, infamia*). The family is at sea without a citizen man looking out for them, so Sostrata must call on her late husband's friend Hegio for help (352–53), and he also points out that the precarity of their situation makes them vulnerable to those who would take advantage of them: "Because of their powerlessness, they always think they

are being closed in” (607, *propter suam impotentiam se semper credunt claudier*).

Sostrata and her household are lucky that they do have citizen men who care about their welfare, as Aeschinus has not truly abandoned them and Hegio intervenes on their behalf. Sostrata shows, though, that she is more than willing to stand up for her daughter herself. Even though she is being advised against making their situation public by Geta and Canthara (337–43), she wants to take Aeschinus to court for abandoning Pamphila (344–50):

peiore res loco non potis est esse quam in quo nunc sitast.
primum indotatast. tum praeterea, quae secunda ei dos erat, 345
periit: pro virgini dari nuptum non potest. hoc relicuomst
si infitias ibit, testis mecumst anulus quem miserat.
postremo, quando ego conscia mihi sum a me culpam esse hanc procul
neque pretium neque rem ullam intercessisse illa aut me indignam, Geta,
experiar. 350

It’s not possible to be situated in a worse place than she is. First of all, she doesn’t have a dowry. Then, moreover, that which was second to the dowry for her is gone: she can’t be given to marry as a virgin. I have this left, if he denies it: a ring as evidence, which he had sent. Finally, since I know the blame is not on my end, and no price or anything has been traded unworthily of her or me, Geta, I will take it to court.

Sostrata is convinced that her daughter has done nothing wrong and deserves better treatment from Aeschinus. She is so concerned about her that she is willing to risk the disgrace and disrepute, not to mention eventual failure, that will be inevitable if she takes the case to court. Fortunately, she does not have to follow through, but her impassioned speech shows that she will stop at nothing to put her daughter first, despite the difficulties they face as impoverished single women who live mostly without citizen male protection.

These single biological mothers, like the foster mothers Chrysis, Thais, and Melaenis, seek stability for their daughters despite the disadvantage of having no citizen husband to protect them. They leave their homes (Philippa in *Epidicus*; the Lemnian mother in *Phormio*), sacrificing reputation (Sostrata in *Adelphoe*) and even life (the Lemnian mother) in the

process. Also single biological mothers, Cleareta in *Asinaria* and Lena in *Cistellaria* are forced to make the more pragmatic choice of having their daughters work as *meretrices* to keep their family afloat, as citizen marriage is not an option. Furthermore, as in *Andria* and *Eunuchus*, in *Truculentus*, *Phormio*, and *Adelphoe*, enslaved women are invested in the well-being of the household in which they live, and work to protect the young girl at risk in the play. The families I discuss in this chapter share a common lack of a citizen man who takes responsibility at the head of the family, a lack that is at times felt poignantly by women who try to survive despite this disadvantage (e.g., Sostrata in *Adelphoe*; Chrysis in *Andria*, the Lemnian wife in *Phormio*). Yet both Plautus and Terence repeatedly stage the possibility that citizen men do more harm than good, and that disadvantaged women are equally capable, or more so, of protecting vulnerable young women. In contrast to often-faulty fathers, who fail to benefit, provide for, and protect their children, underprivileged mother-figures—lower-class or *meretrix*, biological or adoptive—and the enslaved women in their households, are caring, smart, thoughtful, pragmatic, responsible, and, most of all, consistently protective of their wards or children.

CHAPTER FOUR

A MARRIAGE BY ANY OTHER NAME:

THE SOLDIER AND THE SPECIFIC GIRL

In Roman comedy, marriageable men rarely show interest in long-term relationships with women, in fidelity to specific women, or in starting a family, just as married men often voice disgust with their wives. This lack of desire among citizen men for the trappings of the traditional family is a mark of the playwrights' critique of Roman men. The citizen men who are romantically interested in girls they know are eligible to marry them are limited to two examples: Lysiteles in Plautus' *Trinummus*, in love with Lesbonicus' sister, a woman of his own social class, and Chalinus in Terence's *Andria*, in love with his citizen neighbor's daughter Philumena.¹ In several plays, men end up marrying a girl they had raped at some point earlier (*Aulularia*, *Truculentus*; *Adelphoe*, *Eunuchus*, *Hecyra*), but interest in sexual assault that then leads to marriage is not the same as interest in marriage for its own sake. In the corpus of Roman comedy's twenty-six intact plays, then, only twice do the playwrights depict a love story that does not begin with rape between two persons of recognized birth who are sure to be able to wed in an appropriate marriage and produce legitimate children. This infrequency is not surprising, as

¹ Antipho in *Phormio* could perhaps be added, as he is in love with Phanium, a citizen of Lesbos, which had rights of intermarriage with Athens, but she has not been able to find her local father—hence the trick pulled off by the titular parasite. Aeschinus in *Adelphoe* and Pamphilus in *Andria* love the citizen girls Pamphila and Glycerium, whom they have impregnated.

some of the romantic conflict in the plays comes from the recognition plot, in which a non-citizen beloved is found to be eligible after all. Without the barrier between the characters that recognition solves, the play would lack conflict, plot, and drama.²

Even allowing for this dramatic necessity, however, it is significant that very few free men in Roman comedy show interest in marriage and family life. The ones who do are often in love with pseudo-*meretrices* (Alcesimarchus in *Cistellaria*, Phaedromus in *Curculio*, Agorastocles in *Poenulus*, Plesidippus in *Rudens*; Pamphilus in *Andria*, Clinia in *HT*). Thus, surprisingly, the character in Roman comedy who shows the greatest desire for fidelity, long-term relationships, and children, is not the citizen *adulescens*, but the unlikely figure of the Plautine soldier. Plautus' lack of interest in centering the citizen family shows in his portrayal of the desire in some soldiers for lasting relationships, for relationships with specific women, and for family, desires that Plautine citizen young men almost never share. He makes the contrast between these men and their priorities strongest in *Epidicus*, *Truculentus*, *Miles Gloriosus*, and *Bacchides*. In these plays, the relationship status and goals of the soldiers are explicitly contrasted with those of the citizen men.

Plautus' uxorious soldier is so surprising because the soldiers of Roman Comedy tend to be uncouth, particularly with women. They rarely distinguish between women (Cleomachus of *Bacchides*) and they often threaten violence (Therapontigonus of *Curculio*, Antamonides of *Poenulus*, Stratophanes of *Truculentus*; Thraso of *Eunuchus*) and abduction (Pyrgopolynices of *Miles Gloriosus*). Their preposterous boasting inspired the title of *Miles Gloriosus*, and their

² So the story goes in Plautus' *Cistellaria*, *Curculio*, and *Rudens*, and Terence's *Andria*, *HT*, and *Phormio*. In other plays, the basis for the newly-formed citizen family is rape, such as Plautus' *Aulularia* and *Truculentus* and Terence's *Adelphoe*, *Eunuchus*, and under slightly different circumstances, *Hecyra*. This collection still leaves many plays, mostly by Plautus, that do not display an interest in the marriage and family formation of a younger generation of citizen families, as Sharon James has identified (2020).

uncivilized behavior is regularly ridiculed by other characters (Pyrgopolynices of *Miles Gloriosus*, Thraso of *Eunuchus*).³

Background: The Menandrian Soldier

The marriage-minded soldier, unusually for Plautus, has precedent in Menandrian drama. Typically, Plautine drama is known for breaking free from Menander's interest in the marriage plot and the citizen family, in favor of focusing on enslaved characters, particularly the enslaved trickster (James 2013, 2020; Richlin 2017).⁴ After Plautus, Terence picks up the Menandrian interest in citizen marriage and family, although with his own critiques of the institution (James 2013). This pattern can be identified, at the most basic level, in the proportion of Menandrian originals Terence uses compared to Plautus.⁵ Terence, however, does not employ the plot, familiar from Menander's *Perikeiromene*, *Sikyonioidi*, and *Misoumenos*, in which a soldier identifies a specific girl with whom he would like to settle down.⁶

³ For the figure of the *miles gloriosus* in New Comedy, see, e.g., Ribbeck (1882), Wysk (1921), Blume (2001), Hoffmann and Wartenberg (1973), MacCary (1972), Brown (2004), Hanson (1965). For the evolution of this stock character from earlier comedy, see Konstantakos (2015, 2016).

⁴ As Konstan notes, in contrast, enslaved characters in Menander are marginal (Konstan and Raval 2018, 47; Konstan 2013).

⁵ Terence uses Menandrian models (*Adelphoi B*, *Andria*, *Eunuchos*, *Heauton Timoroumenos*, *Kolax*, *Perinthia*) for *Adelphoe*, *Andria*, *Eunuchus*, and *HT*, and the plays of Apollodorus of Carystus (*Epidikazomenos*, *Hekyra*) as models for *Phormio* and *Hecyra*, as well as others through *contaminatio* (Brown 2013, Nervegna 2020). Plautus adapted roughly three of Menander's plays (*Adelphoi A*, *Dis Exapaton*, *Synaristosai*), despite producing at least twenty comedies. He also used the work of Diphilus and Philemon (Nervegna 2020).

⁶ Lape has identified this pattern and transition from martial to marital life in *Misoumenos* and *Perikeiromene* (2004, 171–201). She treats *Sikyonioidi* in a different light (202–42) but still notes that Stratophanes, the mercenary soldier of the play, is “inclined toward monogamy” (216).

In *Perikeiromene*, the soldier Polemon co-opts Glykera as his *pallake*. He considers her his wife⁷ (489, ἐγὼ γαμετὴν νενόμικα ταύτην),⁸ and is overcome with jealousy when he sees her kissing Moschion. He cuts off her hair, prompting her to flee to the house of her neighbor Myrrhine, Moschion's adoptive mother. Glykera already knows that Moschion is her brother, so she is not romantically interested in him. Eventually she is discovered to be a citizen woman, and she and Polemon are engaged at the end of the play. Her father, Pataikos, uses traditional language of Athenian marriage to cement their betrothal: "I give this woman to you for the purpose of sowing lawful children" (1013–14, ταύτην γν[ησίων / παιδῶν ἐπ' ἀρότῳ σοι δίδωμι). He also suggests that Polemon give up his military career (1016–17), a move that would signify his commitment to becoming a husband, father, and responsible civic community member. Polemon ends the play repenting his violence toward Glykera (982–88, 1018–20). Over the course of this play, then, a violence-prone soldier reforms himself and becomes a mature citizen husband, all the while being in love with, and finally marrying, a specific woman, not interchangeable with any other.

In *Sikyonioi*, Stratophanes has been in love with Philoumene since she was enslaved in his household as a girl. In the end, they both turn out to be Athenians, so they can be married (249–57). Further, in both *Perikeiromene* and *Sikyonioi*, the soldier wins out over the citizen man who is also interested in the girl in question, showing the soldier's worthiness as a mate. In *Misoumenos*, Thrasonides is committed to Krateia. Although she was enslaved after being captured in war, he considered her his wife (40, γυναῖκα νομίσας), and she considered him her

⁷ Cf. also how Pataikos says Polemon has described their union: "If what you said really happened, Polemon, and she is your wife" (486–87, εἰ μὲν τι τοιοῦτ' ἦν, Πολέμων, οἷόν φατε / ὑμεῖς τὸ γεγονός, καὶ γαμετὴν γυναῖκά σου).

⁸ The text of Menander throughout is Arnott's (1996, 2000). Translations are my own.

husband (708, ἀνὴρ), and their relationship began like a married couple's: "I had you as a virgin, I was first called your husband, I cherished you" (707–708, παρθένον σ' εἶ[λ]ηφ' ἐγ[ώ] / ἀνὴρ ἐκλήθην πρῶτος, ἠγάπησά σε). Throughout the play, he is distraught about her rejection of him, as she mistakenly thinks he killed her brother, and remains disconsolate that he cannot legally marry her (663–64, 698–700). In the end, they are formally betrothed, most likely with the same traditional language as in *Perikeiromene* about sowing children (974–76),⁹ and the wedding is set for the next day (989–90). Thrasonides has shown himself throughout as devoted to this one girl, eager to marry her. In the end, he becomes part of the citizen family via marriage.

In Menander's Athens, war and conflict were ever-present issues, and mercenary soldiers were fixtures of the community.¹⁰ Similarly, Plautus' marriage-minded soldier is specifically relevant to the time period in which he produced his plays. Rome of the 200s BCE was embroiled in war, a climate that affected the production of Roman comedy.¹¹ Plautus' audience would have included soldiers hoping to start a family after service, active servicemen in long-term relationships while on campaign, and people of various social and civic status who had experienced military service.¹²

⁹ The lines are very fragmentary, but Arnott (1997) reconstructs them to include the traditional betrothal formula: παιδ[ων ἐπ' ἀρότω γνησίων / δίδωμι τὴν ἐμὴν θυγατέρα σοί γ' ἔχειν (974–75, "I give my daughter to you to have and for sowing lawful children").

¹⁰ For the historical context of Menander's comedies, see, e.g., Lape (2004, 1–39), Major (1997), Owens (2011), Wiles (1984).

¹¹ There are too many sources about the brutality of the wars in this period to reference here. See in particular those who discuss the casualties, loss, and fear of the Hannibalic Wars in light of Plautus' comedy, and their sources: Leigh (2004, 24–56), Richlin (2017, 34–40; 2018), Konstan and Raval (2018, 47), Burton (2020). For the complex feelings those of different statuses might have had towards war and public performance, see Richlin (2018).

¹² As Richlin notes, "In the 200s BCE, at Italian urban festivals like the *ludi Romani*, comedies played to audiences where veterans, captive slaves, freed slaves, and their kin—male and female—sat side by side" (2018, 213). Although she notes that enlisted soldiers would not have been watching the plays when they were on campaign (220), she also discusses which types of soldiers would have been in the audience

These viewers and more could have seen themselves in the marriage plot of the soldier. Many soldiers in the Roman army would have had relationships both while on campaign and when they came home between campaigns, with women whom they could not legally marry, such as *meretrices* or foreign women (Machado 2017, 89–104). Furthermore, although in the Republic there was no marriage ban for Roman citizen soldiers,¹³ many of them probably waited until the end of their military service to marry and start a family (Rosenstein 2004, 82–94). Such men could have had serious relationships that would not result in marriage during their years of active duty. Finally, the socially stratified Roman army was not made up purely of Roman citizens (Richlin 2018, 218–19).¹⁴ These men and, in some cases, their partners might not have had access to legal Roman marriage. Plautus’ interest in the unconventional family, here his reinvention of the soldier and the specific girl, would have resonated with audience members who could see themselves in the marriage plot of a soldier and a *meretrix*, rather than a conventional citizen pair.¹⁵

(229). As Rosenstein notes, moreover, soldiers could return home during their terms of service, even if they were serving overseas (2004, 103–104). Richlin also discusses the social stratification of the audience (*passim*) and playwrights (215) of Roman drama.

¹³ For the seminal study on the marriage of Roman soldiers in the Empire, see Phang (2001).

¹⁴ As Richlin concisely puts it, “It is, then, highly misleading to imagine the army as made up of ‘citizens,’ undifferentiated, when in fact, as so often in history, there were gradations” (2018, 219). For more on the division of the Republican army based on social class, see Rawlings (2011, 56–57), Brunt (1971, 402–406). For enslaved people in the Republican army, see Welwei (1988, 5–18), Stewart (2012, 125–29), Hunt (2017, 10); enslaved audience members might have particularly identified with the soldier’s slave, an extremely common character in Plautus’ drama whom Richlin discusses (2018, 229–31).

¹⁵ Indeed, Richlin notes that in an urban audience, the lower ranks of the army and enslaved members would have been more represented than more elite census groups, especially the *equites* (2018, 229, 229n.42). For this overwhelmingly lower-class audience, a representation of a non-traditional relationship might have been even more compelling.

But Plautus' uxorious soldiers show a marked difference from Menander's. Rather than being integrated into the citizen family at the close of the play, they remain outside it. Some soldiers are identified as *peregrini*, "foreigners," non-citizens without the *ius Latinum*. These men could not have *iustum coniugium* and thus could not have been part of a Roman citizen family. *Peregrini milites* could not have been members of the Roman army; in fact, there are no Roman soldiers presented in Roman comedy.¹⁶ In *Truculentus*, Stratophanes is identified as a Babylonian *peregrinus miles* (84, 202, 392, 472, 955); in *Bacchides*, the invented married soldier is also a *peregrinus miles* (1009). In *Epidicus*, the soldier Stratippocles is ostensibly Athenian and there are two other Greek soldiers identified: a Euboean and a Rhodian (153, 300). In *Miles Gloriosus*, Pyrgopolynices is also Greek.

As usual, however, the setting of Roman comedy is complicated. Amy Richlin has noted, for example, that Stratophanes in *Truculentus* gives a speech referencing current affairs in the Roman army (233–34), and Stratippocles in *Epidicus*, although presented as a soldier returning home to Athens, is a member of a *legio* (46, 58, 91) and participates in a procession likened to a triumph (208–12) (223).¹⁷ Despite the surface foreignness of these soldiers, Plautus shows their experiences as relevant to members of the Roman military and portrays them as part of Roman life. In this way, he makes their family relationships part of the Rome he creates in his dramas, portraying a more expansive vision of family in Rome than exists in other literary evidence, or has previously been noticed in scholarship on the genre.¹⁸

¹⁶ Amy Richlin, *per litteras*.

¹⁷ Musti also notes the prevalence of Roman legal language in *Epidicus* (2006, 78).

¹⁸ With this point, I disagree with Brown, who thinks the Plautine *miles gloriosus* would always have been viewed as an outsider by the audience. Brown suggests that not every soldier in Plautus would have appeared as an outsider, listing Stratippocles and Periphanes in *Epidicus*, for example, as men who serve in the military, but are citizens and thus insiders (2004, 1–4). Although I think Stratippocles' and

Epidicus

In *Epidicus*, a Euboean¹⁹ soldier wants to find his girlfriend (*amica*, 457, 482), Acropolistis, in order to free her and make her his long-term partner: “I want to make her my freedwoman today so she can be my concubine” (465–66, *ego illam uolo hodie facere libertam meam / mihi concubina quae sit*). As he explains, he needs to free her first to have her as a concubine. This aim implies that the soldier wants a lasting relationship with this woman. If he were satisfied by owning an enslaved girl for sexual purposes, there would be no need to free her.²⁰ The soldier’s desire to make Acropolistis his freed concubine shows a desire for a more serious partnership with her, even though concubinage is not the same as legal marriage.²¹

The soldier’s determination to find Acropolistis specifically also shows his commitment to her. That is, it demonstrates that he wants her particularly, rather than any other girl. She is not interchangeable with other women whom he could easily purchase for purposes of sexual

Periphanes’ status as Athenian citizens is relevant, by staging three soldiers in one play Plautus calls attention to the similarities as well as the differences between these men, as I discuss below. Furthermore, Brown does not consider non-citizens in the audience.

¹⁹ The identity of this soldier is highly contested, as he is referred to as both Euboean (153) and Rhodian (300). For a detailed account of possible explanations for this phenomenon, along with sources, see Duckworth (1940, ad 153–55), Faller (2001), Musti (2006, 49–50). Faller notes that both Euboea and Rhodes would have been highly relevant to Plautus’ audience at the time because of contemporary military activity (2001, 254–56). For my purposes, the precise identity of the soldiers matters less than the fact that he is a foreign soldier, which is true whether he is Euboean or Rhodian.

²⁰ See, for example, Antamonides of *Poenulus*, who plans to purchase Anterastilis, but does not see her as a future life partner.

²¹ For concubinage, see, e.g., Hersch (2010, 27–29), Treggiari (1991, 51–52) and Rawson (1974), who concludes that although it was not a legal union, it was often discussed and treated with the same vocabulary as marriage (304). The evidence for this issue is intractably post-Plautine, but Plautus’ use of the term *concubina* suggests that at least the soldier considers concubinage a form of marriage. He is ready to pay the highest sum recorded in Roman comedy (sixty minas, 466–72) in order to have this relationship with Acropolistis, a fact that indicates how seriously he takes the whole matter.

companionship. When he appears at Periphanes' house to try to track her down, he is presented with the unnamed *fidicina*, rather than Acropolistis.²² The soldier instantly knows that she is not his girlfriend and refuses her: "I'm saying, this isn't her. Do you think I can't recognize my own girlfriend?" (480–81, *non haec inquam est. non nouisse me / meam rere amicam posse?*).²³ He is not willing to pay the sixty minae (468) that Periphanes is asking for this girl, who is a hired musician. Rather, he determines to go after the girl he wants: "I myself will find her now, wherever she is" (492, *ego illam requiram iam ubi ubi est*).²⁴

In *Epidicus*, the foreign soldier's conduct, compared to the local men's, is especially striking because all three share a military background. The *senex* Periphanes appears to be a retired *miles gloriosus*, boasting to the soldier about his past military exploits (444–57).²⁵ Stratippocles, his son, is returning from military service, in the course of which he had purchased

²² A few scholars think that the unnamed *fidicina* in this play is not a third character but Telestis herself. See Musti for a detailed argument and sources (2006, *passim*, but especially 63–70).

²³ The soldier's ability to distinguish the women is likened to Philippa's instant knowledge that Acropolistis is not her daughter in a parallel subsequent scene (573–80). Philippa does not back down from her assertion that Acropolistis is not her daughter even when Periphanes tries to convince her she is confused because the girl is in different garb. Her assertion that a costume change would not keep her from recognizing her own daughter sets her apart from the *senex*, who has no idea who the two girls he has brought into his home are. The soldier's and Philippa's back-to-back scenes of recognition of each different girl, contrasted with the comic confusion of Periphanes, liken them to each other rather than to the citizen men in the play. Musti notes this similarity, saying that, like Philippa for Telestis, the soldier loves and seeks out Acropolistis and thus knows how to recognize her (2006, 39); Monda also gives some parallels between the two scenes (2006, 110).

²⁴ Musti seems to note that the soldier gives up on Acropolistis here, but it seems to me that he is determined to find her (2006, 40).

²⁵ Duckworth calls the meeting between the two boastful soldiers "amusing" (1940, ad 437–74), as does Raffaelli (2006, 95–96). See Raffaelli for a full discussion of the textual problem in this scene (2006). Slater notes that Periphanes is a unique example of a character who references having inhabited multiple roles: now a *senex*, he used to be an *adulescens amans* (382–87) and a *miles gloriosus*; in this way, Plautus draws metatheatrical attention to the way stock types correspond with stages of life (2001, 194–95).

Telestis.²⁶ In contrast, he has not distinguished himself, as he has lost his weapons (29–38).²⁷ All three men have military service in common, but they have opposing attitudes to women and family. Periphanes is an *osor mulierum* who rejoices at the death of his wife (172–80), and had raped and abandoned Philippa and their daughter long before (540–45).²⁸ His plan to marry Philippa arises from guilt, not from affection (166–72). Periphanes also fails to check for recognition tokens when attempting to find his daughter (596–97), and believes that Philippa is confused about the identity of their daughter because she has changed her clothes (578).²⁹ He is, at best, an incompetent comic figure rather than a capable father.

Although Stratippocles has freed Acropolistis (501–509),³⁰ he is far from committed to her, as he switched his affections to Telestis when she was among war captives and purchased her. As he explains to Epidicus, he used to love Acropolistis, but has changed his mind: “I loved her once, now another affection already hangs over my heart” (135, *illam amabam olim, nunc iam alia cura impendent pectori*). Thesprio, an enslaved member of their household, describes his change of heart metaphorically, comparing his fickleness to the wind: “However the wind is on the ocean, Epidicus, accordingly the sail is turned” (49, *utquomque in alto uentust, Epidice,*

²⁶ Richlin notes the elements of Roman military life in the scene of Stratippocles’ return (2018, 223).

²⁷ Musti notes that Stratippocles is a *miles* type in this play, but a cowardly one, not a *gloriosus* (2006, 49). For a discussion of these lines, see Duckworth (1940, ad 33, 34) Richlin (2018, 230–31), Lefèvre (2001, 118–20).

²⁸ Contrast Duckworth (1940, ad 173), who believes there is nothing to justify the “Periphanis horror mulierum” identified by Schredinger (1884, 34).

²⁹ Slater calls this a “feeble attempt” by Periphanes to convince Philippa that she is confused (2001, 200).

³⁰ For a discussion of the complications surrounding Acropolistis’ manumission, see Duckworth (1940, ad 153–55).

exim uelum uortitur).³¹ Further, although Stratippocles' military service shows him to be older than the typical comic *adulescens*, he shows none of the soldier's desire to settle down with a permanent partner—in his case, a legitimate wife. Indeed, Epidicus notes his hesitation about marriage (*consultatio nuptiarum*, 282–83).

It is made plain early on that although Stratippocles is in love with Telestis, he has not touched her sexually: “But I have never brought any violence or violation to her chastity” (110, *at pudicitiae eius numquam nec uim nec uitium attuli*).³² This admission assures the audience that this freeborn girl is sexually safe. But, unusually for this genre,³³ her *pudicitia* is not an indication that she is a marriageable citizen girl where Stratippocles is concerned. The fact that Telestis is his sister means that Stratippocles will not end up with the prospect of legitimate citizen marriage at the end of the play. He has dropped Acropolistis for Telestis, whom he will have to give up once he learns of their relationship. As he puts it when he discovers her identity: “You have lost me and found me, sister” (652, *perdidisti et repperisti me, soror*). At the end of the play, then, Stratippocles leaves behind two girls and looks forward to zero marriage prospects. Although Epidicus suggests he go back to Acropolistis (653), there is no indication that he will—and even if he did, theirs would be a temporary relationship rather than a citizen marriage.³⁴

³¹ Duckworth notes that this *sententia* indicates Stratippocles' lack of character (1940, ad 49), and remarks on his fickleness as a lover (ad 653), as does Musti (“ha il cuore facile” 2006, 48).

³² Lines 109–111 have been considered an interpolation by some scholars; see Duckworth for a discussion (1940, ad 109–111).

³³ Nowhere else in the genre does a citizen girl whose *pudicitia* is intact not end up with marriage prospects at the end of the play. Lowe notes that Telestis' intact *pudicitia* has no bearing on the outcome of Plautus' play (2001, 62).

³⁴ Scholars have reacted with dissatisfaction to Epidicus' suggestion; see Duckworth for examples (1940, ad 653). Musti seems to think it would have been possible for Stratippocles to marry Acropolistis (2006,

The citizen men's reluctance to marry is highlighted in this play by their friends' urging them to pursue eligible women. Chaeribulus praises Stratophanes for choosing Telestis, calling her a "captive born from a good family" (107, *captiuam genere prognatam bono*). In a parallel conversation, Apocides tells Periphanes that he should marry Philippa (166–72), as she is "a poor woman from a good family" (169, *genere gnatam bono pauperem*), but Periphanes expresses reluctance.³⁵ Yet they still end up without marriage prospects, in Stratippocles' case, or a lack of resolution about the marriage, in Periphanes'.³⁶ Plautus lingers on the irrational reluctance of the citizen men toward married life and family.

The difference between the citizen and non-citizen characters in this play, then, is all the more striking for their similarities. The Theban Philippa, the Euboean soldier, and the enslaved Epidicus are the ones who care about the individual girls, and are able to tell which girl is which. The soldier is the only man seriously interested in a long-term relationship with a specific woman. Periphanes and Stratippocles, the citizen men, cannot recognize which girl is a member of their family³⁷ and are uninterested in citizen marriage and family life. All three are soldiers, yet unexpectedly, the one who reveals that he cares about the identity of a woman, who does not

43, 88); I disagree, as does Petrone (2001, 180). If the Euboean soldier should find her, she might prefer to settle down with him rather than becoming an independent *meretrix*.

³⁵ Duckworth discusses different interpretations of Periphanes' reluctance to marry again (1940, ad 166–180, ad 173), as well as how these dialogues with their friends, and similar motives, liken father and son (ad 106–108). Lowe also notes the parallels between the two scenes (2001, 62).

³⁶ Scholars note that neither marriage plan—for Stratippocles or Periphanes—is fulfilled at the end of the play. See Petrone (2001, 180), Musti (2006, 40, 87–89), Duckworth (1940, 208, ad 190). Duckworth calls the lack of resolution for either citizen man an "unsatisfactory conclusion" (1940, 394); for reasoning and sources on the ending of the play, see Duckworth (1940, 394–96). Hartkamp posits that Plautus did not care about Stratippocles' future happiness and thus does not include his wedding (2001, 165n.16).

³⁷ Although their confusion is understandable given that they had no previous relationships with the young women, their ignorance and fickleness also show a willingness to exchange them, a lack of caring about the identity of a specific girl is as long as some girl is in their possession

see women as interchangeable or disposable, and who wants a long-term relationship with a particular partner, is the interfering foreign soldier type rather than the young citizen man or his father.³⁸

Truculentus

In Plautus' *Truculentus*, the romantic relationships all involve the protagonist, the *meretrix* Phronesium. Yet her relationships with her three lovers differ greatly and reveal much about the differences in these men's ages and attitudes. The main difference I explore here is that between Diniarchus and Stratophanes and their interest in marriage and family. Diniarchus is a youngish citizen man but not an *adulescens*: he is old enough to have been sent on an assignment involving state business—"I was dispatched there from here with power from the state" (93, *legatus quo hinc cum publico imperio fui*)—and he has no parents in the picture. Despite his age and status, he is interested only in an *ad libitum* sexual relationship with Phronesium, rather than the citizen marriage that he should be taking up. The soldier Stratophanes is also on the older side and apparently without parents, but he seeks a long-term marriage-like relationship with Phronesium and plans to raise a child with her.³⁹

Diniarchus' relationship with Phronesium is characterized by proto-elegiac love language. Phronesium and her enslaved maid, Astaphium, call her his girlfriend (*amica*, 167,

³⁸ Although Periphanes must marry Philippa in order to legitimate Telestis, he does not set out to find a wife (indeed, he had abandoned her after raping her years before). He fits the pattern of the guilty conscience of the elderly one-time rapist, as with Demipho of *Cistellaria*.

³⁹ Strabax, Phronesium's third lover, is a younger citizen boy who speaks about visiting his parents. He also seems to be interested only in a sexual relationship with Phronesium rather than anything more permanent.

356), and he uses lovers' language about her appearance: "Look at spring: how she's entirely blooming, fragrant, shining glowingly!" (353–54, *uer uide: / ut tota floret, ut olet, ut nitide nitet!*). He calls her "my life" (*mea uita*, 391) and "my Phronesium" (*mea Phronesium*, 362). When he is angry with her, he insults her, calling her a "trap" (*illecebra*, 759) and a "witch" (*uenefica*, 762), and the Plautine coinage *suppostrix* (763, "fraudulent substituter of children"),⁴⁰ but when they make up, he says he will continue secretly to call her his *oculum* ("eye," 882), a common lovers' endearment, despite his upcoming marriage to the young woman who has given birth to his son.

Stratophanes' discourse about Phronesium adds a new element. Like Diniarchus, he talks about her like a lover, referring to her as his girlfriend (*amica*, 497, 623, 893), as well as "my desire" (*mea uoluptas*, 521, 536, 540, 546, 899), "my honey" (*mel meum*, 528), and "my Phronesium" (*mea Phronesium*, 529). But their relationship is also presented as being like a marriage. Phronesium says he "kept me **like a wife** for himself for the year while he was here" (392–93, *qui quasi uxorem sibi / me habebat annum dum hic fuit*). He also greets her using the analogy of married Roman gods: "Coming from afar, Mars greets his wife Nerio" (515, *Mars peregre adueniens salutat Nerienem uxorem suam*), and when he is angry about potential rivalry with Diniarchus, he refers to him as an "adulterer" (*moechum*, 609–10). This technical term shows how possessive Stratophanes is about his relationship with Phronesium. Furthermore, when Phronesium soothes Diniarchus that she will eventually leave Stratophanes, she refers to the end of their relationship as "divorce and disharmony" (420, *diuortium et discordium*). As

⁴⁰ *Suppostrix* may not have been invented by Plautus, but is unattested elsewhere.

seen above, the word *diuortium* is a technical term for the dissolution of a marriage (*OLD* s.v. *diuortium*, 4).⁴¹

Most uniquely of all, Stratophanes wants to raise a child with Phronesium. His desire to have a son with her is the basis of the plot and of the play’s major deception, as it is in order to trick him into financial support that she has obtained a supposititious baby (17–18). Phronesium bases her plan on the correct judgment that Stratophanes wants a child with her: as she explains to Diniarchus, she pretended to be pregnant “so that there would be some snare and bond, so that he’d make his return to me again” (395–96, *ut esset aliquis laqueus et redimiculum, / reuorsionem ut ad me faceret denuo*). Her plan works, and he sends her a letter saying he wants to keep and support the child (397–400):

nunc huc remisit nuper ad me epistulam
 sese experturum quanti sese penderem:
 si quod peperissem id <non n>ecarem ac tollerem,
 bona sua me habiturum omnia [esse].

400

Now he sent a letter here to me recently, that he was about to test how much I value him: if I didn’t kill, but I raised the child I had given birth to, I would have all his property.

Stratophanes views the baby as a measure of Phronesium’s feelings for him, and is willing to support her and the baby financially. He is also genuinely excited about the child itself, as he cannot wait to hear about the baby and whether it looks and acts like him (503–508):

AST:	salue ecastor, Stratophanes. [uenire] saluom <te>—	
STRAT:	scio. sed peperitne, opsecro, Phronesium?	
AST:	peperit puerum nimium lepidum.	
STRAT:	ehem, ecquid mei similest?	
AST:	rogas?	505
	quin ubi natust machaeram et clupeum poscebat sibi?	
STRAT:	meus est, scio iam de argumentis.	
AST:	nimium tui similest.	

⁴¹ The word is used for divorce in *Stichus* (204, *diuortio*).

non enim possunt militares pueri ut auium educier.
 STRAT: respice ergo: accipe hoc <sis> qui istuc efficias opus.
 PHRON: cedo, quamquam parum est.
 STRAT: addam etiam unam minam istuc post.
 PHRON: parum est. 910
 STRAT: tuo arbitratu quod iubebis dabitur. da nunc sauium.

 PHRON: This need can never be completed in one day without there always
 being need; indeed, boys of soldiers can't be raised like those of birds!
 STRAT: Look, then: take this, so you can complete that need.
 PHRON: Give it, even though it's too little.
 STRAT: I'll add also one more mina after that.
 PHRON: It's too little.
 STRAT: What you ask for will be given, at your demand. Now give me a kiss.

Although Phronesium is irritated with him still when they part after this conversation, he does pay her and promise to pay more as she needs it. Her entreaty that the sons of soldiers must be raised a certain way makes him believe that she is counting on him to care that the child will be raised with the advantages he deserves. The fact that he actually gives her money rather than mere promises proves that Phronesium has judged his priorities correctly: he is serious about supporting her, her household, and his son.

At the end of the play, Stratophanes does seem open to the idea of sharing access to Phronesium with her third lover, Strabax (962). He also threatens violence against Phronesium and her household on multiple occasions (639, 926–27). Although he is far from a perfect mate, his interest in a marriage-like relationship and especially in raising this child with her sets him apart from not only Diniarchus, who is in fact the baby's biological father, but all other young men in Plautus.⁴²

⁴² Pamphilus of Terence's *Andria* and Aeschinus of *Adelphoe* are both willing to raise a child with the women they will marry, but neither shows Stratophanes' excitement at the prospect. For another analysis of Stratophanes as an unusual character, this time regarding his perspective on officers and soldiers, see Richlin (2018, 233–34).

In contrast, Diniarchus is wholly uninterested in marriage and children even when the prospect is directly before him. Diniarchus has raped a citizen girl, the daughter of Callicles, to whom he was previously engaged (825). There is no reason given for the ending of this betrothal—perhaps Diniarchus ended it, as he shows no desire to marry. He raped this young woman at some point after the betrothal was off,⁴³ and he has known her identity the whole time (unlike parallel rapes in New Comedy after which the perpetrator does not know whom his victim was, as in, e.g., *Epitrepontes* and *Hecyra*).⁴⁴ When Diniarchus sees her father approach, he becomes fearful of discovery: “I’m afraid: after one care just moved my heart, I’m worried all my old bad deeds have been found out” (773–74, *pertimui: postquam una cura cor meum mouit modo, / timeo ne [me] male facta antiqua mea sint inuenta omnia*). He does not want to face the (theatrical) consequences, i.e., marriage or public disgrace, that discovery of his crime will entail.

As this discovery becomes imminent, he continues to refer to his crime: “I’m afraid nevertheless, because I know how I transgressed” (786, *timeo tamen, egomet <quia> quod peccavi scio*), as well as hope for concealment: “Alas, I’m miserable! Now my crimes are being revealed which I hoped would be secret” (794–95, *uae misero mihi! / mea nunc facinora aperiuntur clam quae speravi fore*). He is finally forced to come clean by the enslaved women who are being tortured and interrogated about his daughter’s pregnancy and baby. Callicles’ *ancilla* knows Diniarchus’ identity, a proof that Callicles’ daughter also knows who her rapist was. The *ancilla* sees him hiding and reveals him and his crime (817–26). Diniarchus’ cover-up

⁴³ He says his deed was “the fault of wine” (*uini uitio*, 828), a common excuse for rape in New Comedy, and Callicles uses the verb *stupro* to describe the crime (*stuprauerit*, 821).

⁴⁴ Diniarchus must know exactly whom he has raped, as it is her father Callicles’ appearance that causes him to fear exposure (773–74).

shows that he does not want to marry Callicles' daughter. When he finally admits to the rape, he tries to supplicate Callicles and to use wine as an excuse (826–28); when Callicles rejects that (829–33), he admits guilt (834–35). But only when Callicles threatens to take him to court does Diniarchus suggest marriage (840–41):

CAL: eamus tu in ius.

DIN: quid uis in ius me ire? tu es praetor mihi.
 uerum te opsecro ut tuam gnatam des mi uxorem, Callicles.

CAL: Let's go to court, you.

DIN: Why do you want me to go to court? You're my
 praetor! But I'm imploring you to give me your daughter as a wife,
 Callicles.

Diniarchus has had plenty of opportunity and reason to become a husband. He knows his victim and was engaged to her in the past. Instead of marrying her, though, he wants to keep the rape a secret. Only the threat of a court case compels him to do right by her in the end. These circumstances indicate that he has no desire to be in a wedded relationship.

Finally, although Diniarchus agrees to wed Callicles' daughter, his contrast with Stratophanes is cemented in their different attitudes to the baby. Unlike Stratophanes, excited by the prospect of a son and willing to raise and support him and Phronesium, Diniarchus is uninterested in the welfare of his legitimate biological son or the baby's mother. Callicles asks him to get his son back from Phronesium, which he sets off to do (846–50). But when Phronesium explains that she needs more time with the boy to deceive the soldier, Diniarchus leaves the child with her (873–78):

PHRON: in rem meam <est>.

 triduum hoc saltem, dum miles aliqua circumducitur,
 sine me habere: siquidem habebō, tibi quoque etiam proderit: 875
 si auferes [puerum], a milite omnis [tum] mihi spes animam efflauerit.

DIN: factum cupio, nam refacere si uelim, non est locus;
 nunc puero utere et procura, quando quor cures habes.

PHRON: It's in my interest.
 At least for these three days, while the soldier is deceived in some way,
 let me have him: if I have him, this will also even benefit you:
 if you take him away, all hope for me from the soldier will have
 breathed its last breath.

DIN: I want it to be done, for if I wanted to undo it, there's no place for that;
 Now use the boy and take care of him, since you have a reason to care.

The plan to which Diniarchus agrees benefits only himself and Phronesium. He thinks neither of his own child nor of the child's mother. Although the baby seems safe enough with Phronesium, the responsible thing for a new father to do would be to take his child home to his wife-to-be, not leave him at the house of his erstwhile girlfriend, who is openly using the child for financial gain.

Diniarchus has none of Stratophanes' enthusiasm for family life. Indeed, once he agrees to leave the baby with Phronesium, his last lines consist of making arrangements to visit her covertly in future (879–83):

PHRON: multum amo te ob istam rem mecastor. ubi domi metues malum,
 fugito huc ad me: saltem amicus mi esto momentarius. 880

DIN: bene uale, Phronesium.

PHRON: iam <me> tuom oculum <non> uocas?

DIN: id quoque interatim furtim nomen commemorabitur.
 numquid uis?

PHRON: fac ualeas.

DIN: operae ubi mi erit, ad te uenero.

PHRON: Really, I love you a lot on account of this. When you fear bad things at home, flee here to me: at least you will be my occasional boyfriend.

DIN: Be well, Phronesium.

PHRON: Now you're not calling me your eye?

DIN: That name will be remembered at times, secretly.
 Do you want anything?

PHRON: That you're well.

DIN: When I have time, I'll come to you.

Although there is nothing legally wrong with a married Roman man visiting a *meretrix* in his free time, Diniarchus' final lines show him to be still enamored of Phronesium rather than

committed to his new marriage. Rather than end his play with a joyful, forward-looking citizen union and the prospect of children, Plautus makes Diniarchus' wife and baby an afterthought and a side plot. He keeps the focus on Phronesium and on the language of marriage and family between a *meretrix* and a mercenary soldier with no prospect of a traditional legal union.

Miles Gloriosus

In *Miles Gloriosus*, marriage language and long-term relationships are again the purview of the soldier rather than citizen men, but the soldier in this play is not as seriously interested in long-term relationships as the soldiers in *Epidicus* and *Truculentus*. He agrees to commit adultery with a married woman—or so he thinks: she is a *meretrix* in disguise. Regardless, Plautus focuses on the relationships between non-citizens rather than citizens. In *Miles*, the soldier's use of marriage language and the prospect of his fake marriage can be directly contrasted to the anti-marriage attitude and lack of marriage prospects of the play's citizen men.

At the beginning of the play, the soldier Pyrgopolynices displays a tenuous commitment to the *meretrix* Philocomasium. It seems that he has fixated on her specifically, as he has deceived her mother, a *lena*, and kidnapped her (109–113):

PAL: ubi primum euehit militi huic occasio,
sublinit os illi lenae, matri mulieris, 110
quam erus meus amabat; nam is illius filiam
conicit in nauem miles clam matrem suam,
eamque huc inuitam mulierem in Ephesum aduehit.

PAL: As soon as an opportunity came up for this soldier, he cheated that *lena*, the mother of the woman, whom my master loved; for the soldier put her daughter onto a ship in secret from her mother, and he brought the woman, unwilling, here to Ephesus.

Philocomasium does not want to be with Pyrgopolynices, but he takes her regardless and makes her his captive concubine. He views their relationship as exclusive. His enslaved worker Sceledrus is terrified that he will find out that she has been kissing her lover Pleusicles, who followed them to Ephesus and moved in next door to be close to her. To Pyrgopolynices, she is, as his neighbor Periplectomenus puts it, a “*concupinam ... pudicam*” (508–509, “chaste concubine”), faithful to him alone. He desires her specifically, or there would have been no need to kidnap her.

Although concubinage can be a long-term relationship, Pyrgopolynices quickly switches his affections when he hears that a beautiful married woman wants him. He is told that this woman is divorcing her husband and would like to be with him instead. The rhetoric of their potential sexual encounter is entirely marital. Whether the soldier’s true desire is to marry this woman or to commit adultery with her, he is presented, and presents himself, as someone plausibly interested in marriage. Just as in *Casina*, the potential marriage is a farce, but it is striking that the language of marriage is applied to this comic, false relationship and to no other in the play.

The false marital relationships in this play come about as a ploy by the enslaved trickster Palaestrio to get Pyrgopolynices to release Philocomasium from concubinage (765–70). With the help of the old man Periplectomenus, Palaestrio gets the *meretrix* Acroteleutium to pretend to be a married woman who wants to leave her husband for the handsome soldier. Palaestrio knows this story will feed the braggart soldier’s ego (798–99) as well as appeal to a man who wants to commit adultery (*adulterio studiosus*, 802).⁴⁵ When Palaestrio tells Pyrgopolynices about the

⁴⁵ He is also referred to as *magnus moechus mulierum* (775), and as an adulterer elsewhere throughout the play (90, 924, 1131, 1390, 1398, 1434), even before this plot plays out.

woman who is madly in love with him, the soldier is concerned with her status, both civil and marital (961–66):

- PYR: quid ea? **ingenuane** an festuca facta **e serua libera** est?
PAL: uah! egone ut ad te ab **libertina** esse auderem internuntius,
qui **ingenuis** satis responsare nequeas quae cupiunt tui?
PYR: nuptan est an uidua?
PAL: et nupta et uidua.
PYR: quo pacto potis
nupta et uidua esse eadem?
PAL: quia adulescens nupta est cum sene. 965
PYR: eugae!
- PYR: What of her? Is she **freeborn**, or made a **freedwoman from a slave** by the rod?
PAL: Ha! Would I dare to be a messenger to you from a **freedwoman**, when you can't respond enough to the **freeborn ones** who want you?
PYR: Is she married or unmarried?
PAL: Both married and unmarried.
PYR: How can the same person be married and unmarried?
PAL: Because she is young, married to an old man.
PYR: Hooray!

The fact that the soldier is concerned with the woman's marital status shows that this issue makes a difference to him, but his delight at finding out she is married shows that his concern is humorously wrongheaded. He is excited to commit adultery, whereas a more reasonable reaction to her marital status might be to rejoice if she were unmarried. Palaestrio goes on, however, to explain that she wants to divorce her husband (970–73):

- PAL: ea demoritur te atque ab illo cupit abire: odit senem.
nunc te orare atque opsecrare iussit ut eam copiam
sibi potestatemque facias.
- PAL: She's dying for you and wants to leave him: she hates the old man. Now she's ordered me to ask and beg you to create the opportunity and possibility for her.

Although the soldier knows he will be committing adultery when he sleeps with this woman before her divorce, it is not out of the question that he thinks they will begin an exclusive

relationship once she has left her husband, just as he has had with his kidnapped concubine Philocomasium.

More indicative of the soldier's intentions toward Acroteleutium is his concern with what to do about Philocomasium. When Palaestrio tells the soldier about the married woman newly interested in him, Pyrgopolynices immediately looks for an opportunity to shut Philocomasium out of his house (977, *ut mulierem excludam foras*).⁴⁶ Palaestrio knows that the soldier will want to leave Philocomasium, because the deception relies on his releasing her, after which she can be returned to Pleusicles. The whole plan thus depends on the correct assumption that Pyrgopolynices will want to start a new, exclusive relationship with Acroteleutium. Indeed, the soldier expresses his concern about his concubine again once he hears more about Acroteleutium (1094–96):

PYR: quid nunc mi es auctor ut faciam, Palaestrio,
de concubina? nam nullo pacto potest
prius haec in aedis recipi quam illam amiserim.

PYR: What will you advise me to do now, Palaestrio, about the concubine?
Because in no way is it possible that this one be received into the house
before I send away that one.

The soldier's emphatic language (*nullo pacto potest*) shows his determination to have only one woman in the house at a time, a commitment also evidenced by his worry that he will end up with no woman as a result of kicking Philocomasium out: "But just see that I don't lose that one and this one goes back on her word" (983–84, *sed ne istanc amittam et haec mutet fidem / uide modo*). His plan to start a new relationship with Acroteleutium forces him to let Philocomasium go. This attitude shows him seeking to be with only one woman at a time. Palaestrio's plan, as

⁴⁶ Indeed, Pyrgopolynices' language is reminiscent of the Roman divorce formula that ordered a woman out of the house, used, e.g., in *Casina* (210–12, *i foras, mulier*). For discussion of the language of divorce in Roman comedy, see Rosenmeyer (1995).

well as the soldier's attitude and positive response to it, show that he envisions a more long-term and somewhat exclusive relationship with this new woman.

The potential relationship of Pyrgopolynices and Acroteleutium is described using marriage language throughout the play. When the soldier sees Milphidippa, Acroteleutium's enslaved maid, he is taken by her beauty, but Palaestrio cautions him (1006–1008):

PYR: tum haec celocla autem illa apsenite subigit me ut amem.
hercle hanc quidem
PAL: nil tu amassis; mi haec desponsa est: tibi si illa hodie nupserit,
ego hanc continuo uxorem ducam.

PYR: Then this little boat, indeed, makes me love her when that one's absent.
PAL: No, indeed, you
should not love with this one; she is betrothed to me: if that one marries
you today, I'll immediately make this one my wife.

In order to convince the soldier to wait for Acroteleutium, Palaestrio pretends he will marry Milphidippa himself when her mistress marries the soldier, thereby convincing Pyrgopolynices not to pursue her. Although this language is joking, and Palaestrio knows that neither of them will legally marry these women, it is significant that he explains the relationship to the soldier in marital terms and thereby convinces Pyrgopolynices to stick to their plan.⁴⁷ In some sense, the soldier wants to marry Acroteleutium, while at the same time he is shown to be libidinous by his impatience and interest in Milphidippa.

Acroteleutium also uses marital vocabulary to describe her liaison with Pyrgopolynices, as does Milphidippa. When checking in about her role in the plan with Palaestrio, she summarizes, "And as if, because of my love of him, I've left from my marriage, wanting

⁴⁷ The fact that Palaestrio and Milphidippa cannot legally marry, as they are both enslaved, makes Palaestrio's marital imagery a joke. But at the same time, as Plautus shows in *Casina*, it is possible to talk plausibly about marriage between enslaved people living in the same household (as Milphidippa would be if Acroteleutium moved in with the soldier).

marriage to him” (1164–65, *quasiq̄ue istius causa amoris ex hoc matrimonio / abierim, cupiens istius nuptiarum*). When she knows the soldier can hear her, she laments to Milphidippa about how she will feel if he refuses her: “If he doesn’t want to make me his wife, I will embrace his knees and beg!” (1239–40, *si pol me nolet ducere uxorem, genua amplectar / atque opsecrabo*). Milphidippa herself brings these sentiments to Pyrgopolynices: “She wants to live and spend her days with you” (1275, *tecum uiuere uolt atque aetatem exigere*). This language shows that their goal is to convince the soldier he is entering into a union with a woman who wants to marry him. Of course, in reality, she does not, and she is in fact neither married nor freeborn. But it is convincing and appealing to Pyrgopolynices for their relationship to be presented as such.

Furthermore, Pyrgopolynices believes his upcoming nuptials will be credible to other people. When he wonders how he will amicably convince Philocomasium to leave his house, Palaestrio suggests telling her he plans to marry: “You should say you need to take a wife for yourself; your relatives are prompting you, your friends are forcing you” (1118–19, *dicas uxorem tibi necessum ducere; / cognatos persuadere, amicos cogere*). The soldier’s adoption of this plan shows that marriage is a reasonable life path for him. Finally, Pyrgopolynices shows the interest in children so rare for men in these plays, although as usual for the braggart soldier, in context of an absurd joke (1077–79):

PAL: meri bellatores gignuntur, quas hic praegnatis fecit.
 et pueri annos octingentos uiuont. MILPH: uae tibi, nugator!
 PYR: quin mille annorum perpetuo uiuont ab saeclo ad saeculum.

PAL: Genuine warriors are born to the women he impregnates, and his sons live for eight hundred years!

MILPH: Go to hell, joker!

PYR: No, really, they live continually for a thousand years from one age to the next.

Pyrgopolynices and Palaestrio are telling a ridiculous lie, but one that shows a concern in this new relationship for potential progeny.

The citizen *adulescens* Pleusicles provides a contrast to Pyrgopolynices' interest in long-term relationships and potential family. Philocomasium is his girlfriend (*amica*, 105, 114). He mentions his love for her (86, 88, 621, 1284), calls her "my desire" (*uoluptas mea*, 1346), and kisses her repeatedly at their reunion (1334–35, 1432–33). But Philocomasium and Pleusicles do not have an exclusive relationship, since the soldier keeps her as his concubine. He is content to sneak into the soldier's house for their liaisons, knowing that she is also sexually available to Pyrgopolynices, and he has never made attempts, as the soldier has, to reserve access to her for himself alone. Although Pleusicles is eager to regain his girlfriend, there is no question of their having a permanent relationship, as she is a prostitute.⁴⁸

Pleusicles, like Diniarchus in *Truculentus*, is an adult citizen man with no desire to marry. Unlike Diniarchus, though, even at the end of his play he has no prospects for marriage and there is no indication that he plans to marry, since he ends up with a non-citizen woman. Pleusicles must be on the older side because, like Diniarchus, he was obligated to complete state business before the action of the play begins: "He was dispatched at public expense to Naupactus, because of important public business" (102–103, *is publice legatus Naupactum fuit, / magnai rei publicai gratia*). His disinterest in marriage is all the more noticeable for his maturity: he is likely at the point where a citizen man should customarily be settling down with a wife rather than continuing to pursue *meretrices*.

⁴⁸ The audience will have known throughout the drama that she is not a lost citizen girl, as this outcome would require her chastity to be unmarred. As the soldier's concubine and a working *meretrix* before that, she has been sexually active.

Pleusicles' lack of interest in marriage is also shown in his conversation on the subject with the *senex* Periplectomenus. This older man is full of praise for the lifestyle of the lovesick *amator*, despite his years, and maintains that he has not forgotten what it is like to be carefree, going on to list his charming behavior at banquets (642–48, 651–56) and his willingness to help a young man in love (659–68). Periplectomenus also has strong feelings about the evils of wives, especially dowered ones (672–82, 685–700). His sentiments about the nagging and spendthrift tendencies of married women are familiar from the various misogynistic older men in Roman comedy (e.g., Megadorus in *Aulularia*, Matrona's father in *Menaechmi*; Micio in *Adelphoe*). Interestingly, Periplectomenus also markedly opposes having children, a sentiment not shared by many of comedy's other old misogynists.⁴⁹

The *senex* maintains his opinion despite the fact that Palaestrio notes the advantages of offspring, “Why don't you want them? For it is a charming task to father children” (682, *quor non uis? nam procreare liberos lepidum est opus*). Pleusicles also comments that having children is a positive development: “But that is praiseworthy, for a man to bring up children in a great family and the greatest riches, a monument to the family and to himself! (703–704, *at illa laus est, magno in genere et in diuitiis maxumis / liberos hominem educare, generi monumentum et sibi*). Periplectomenus, though, makes the case that relatives and friends are as supportive as children (705–15) without causing the same anxieties (718–22). Palaestrio and Pleusicles both respond positively to this argument, as Palaestrio asserts that “You see to yourself and your life well and with excessively good reason. And you have twin and triplet sons if you're living in a good state” (716–17, *nimis bona ratione nimiumque ad te et tuam uitam uides: / et tibi sunt gemini et trigemini, si te bene habes, filii*). Pleusicles says, “This man is worthy to be given

⁴⁹ Megadorus in *Aulularia* wants to marry specifically to have children (148–49); Micio in *Adelphoe* is an adoptive father. In both *Poenulus* and *Menaechmi*, an *osor mulierum* buys and adopts a kidnapped boy.

riches and a long life, who protects his property and lives in a good state and is useful to his friends” (723–24, *huic homini dignum est diuitias esse et diu uitam dari, / qui et rem seruat et se bene habet suisque amicis usui est*).

It seems, then, that this *senex* has convinced a younger citizen to follow his path and become an *osor mulierum*, rather than the pattern that might be expected in New Comedy (and that Terence employs) of the father figure imploring the wayward *adulescens* to settle down and start a family. Plautus, however, portrays Periplectomenus and Pleusicles as rewarded for their lack of interest in the citizen family, as the plan they hatch to reunite the *adulescens* with his unmarried lover goes well. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the relationship between Periplectomenus and Pleusicles is not that of father and son, but of friends. Periplectomenus’ advice to rely on friends rather than family is borne out by the success of his help in achieving Pleusicles’ goals, and his life philosophy seems to be adopted in turn by the young man. At the end of the play, Pleusicles and Philocomasium walk off into the sunset without any prospect of marriage or starting a family, while Periplectomenus and enslaved people belonging to him spread-eagle the soldier to castrate him.

In *Miles Gloriosus*, Pyrgopolynices is a far cry from Stratophanes, who has his faults but genuinely wants to start a family with Phronesium, and from the Euboean soldier of *Epidicus*, unwaveringly committed to one specific girl. Pyrgopolynices is constantly referred to as an adulterer. He switches his affections from Philocomasium to Acroteleutium on a dime, while also being attracted to the enslaved Milphidippa (989, 1003–1004, 1006) and is still jealous when he sees Pleusicles, in disguise, kiss Philocomasium as he takes her away (1334–45, 1347). The play ends with him defeated and repentant of his adulterous behavior (1433–37). Viewers are not

likely to sympathize with him, but his character is distinctive in comparison to Pleusicles'.⁵⁰ Although Pyrgopolynices is eventually thwarted, he is the only person in the play to seriously consider long-term and marital relationships. Both citizen men in the play reject such prospects, pay no consequences for their disinterest, and do not face the possibility of marriage or citizen family at any point in the future.

Bacchides

The foreign soldier Cleomachus of *Bacchides* is not interested in marriage or family life. He has hired Bacchis II on contract for a year. For this reason, he is jealous and possessive of her, to the point of threatening violence against her and her lover (845–91), but his feelings have nothing to do with her as an individual woman. He is equally happy to be paid back the remainder of what he spent on her contract as he is to have her fulfill it (223, 588–91). She, in turn, is trying her best to get out of the obligation, as she does not want to be his *ancilla* (42–46). Unlike the soldier in *Epidicus*, who specifically wants to make Acropolistis alone his freedwoman and concubine, Cleomachus wants a sex worker available to him and he does not care who this woman is.

There is, however, an example of a marriage-minded soldier at the end of the play, invented by the enslaved trickster Chrysalus to trick the *senex* Nicobulus. Although this soldier is not real, his similarity to the soldiers I have discussed in this chapter is striking. His marriage is entirely plausible to the old man. Chrysalus tells Nicobulus that his son is having a relationship with the wife of a soldier. He refers to their relationship with marital vocabulary (851 *vir* ...

⁵⁰ For a discussion of Pyrgopolynices as very much an unsympathetic outsider, and a threat to the citizen family, see Konstan and Raval (2018, 50–51).

mulieris, 1009 *uxore militis*). As Nicobulus understands what he is being told, he uses marital vocabulary himself (851 *uir*, 852 *nuptan est illa*, 916 *miles ... cum uxore ... sua*). He instantly accepts that a soldier can be married, and what is more, married to a woman who is obviously a *meretrix*. When Chrysalus first shows Nicobulus his son and Bacchis II, he asks, “What about her? Do you think she’s a *meretrix*?” (839, *quid illam, meretricemne esse censes*), to which Nicobulus replies, “Certainly” (*quippini*). But once Chrysalus starts making up the story that she is married, it does not take Nicobulus long to believe him (850–54):

NIC:	Chrysale, quis ille est qui minitatur filio?	850
CHR:	uir hic est illius mulieris quacum accubat.	
NIC:	quid, uir?	
CHR:	uir, inquam.	
NIC:	nuptan est illa, opsecro?	
CHR:	scies hau multo post.	
NIC:	oppido interii miser.	
NIC:	Chrysalus, who is that guy who’s threatening my son?	
CHR:	That’s the husband of the women who he’s lying with.	
NIC:	What, her husband?	
CHR:	I’m saying, her husband	
NIC:	That woman is married, please?	
CHR:	You’ll know it after hardly any time.	
NIC:	I’m totally dead.	

Nicobulus’ despairing reaction shows that he believes Chrysalus. Despite initial incredulity, it does not take the *senex* much convincing to believe that a soldier could be married to a woman who acts like a *meretrix*.

As in *Epidicus*, *Truculentus*, and *Miles Gloriosus*, the citizen men of *Bacchides* display a lack of interest in marriage and family. Not only do the young men fall in love with *meretrices* who cannot marry them, but also the *senes* are seduced by the Bacchis sisters at the close of the play. Throughout the drama, a major motif is age-appropriate behavior for citizen men, yet none of the men in the play end up acting respectably. The young men trick their fathers out of money

to pursue relationships with unmarriageable girls, and the old men, although concerned with parenting and affectionate toward their sons, end up egregiously acting like *adulescentes* with the same women. Yet again, the only character in this drama who is presented as invested in a long-term relationship with a woman is an invented foreign soldier (1009 *peregrini ... militis*) ostensibly married to one of the Bacchis sisters, although neither of them could legally marry in Rome.

Conclusion: the marriage-minded soldier

Plautus' interest in staging unconventional relationships, comical and absurd as those may be, drive the plot of these plays and push the boundaries of his genre. His *peregrinus miles* or Greek mercenary soldier who wants a long-term relationship, a marriage, and even children, contrasts with citizen fathers, husbands, and mature young men who avoid, despise, or are utterly indifferent to, marriage and family life. The effect of these choices is threefold. Plautus criticizes the traditionally-structured Roman citizen family by showing male citizenship to be no indicator of ability, desire, effectiveness, or affection where heading a family is concerned. At the same time, he brings onto his stage the relationships of people in his audience whose families were not socially or legally legitimate in the Rome of his day. He gives these relationships meaningful visibility and representation, whether the participants are farcical or serious. Finally, these families on the Plautine stage reflect the circumstances of Rome at war and the priorities of the audience. For many viewers in a city at war, the role of the soldier as perpetual outsider and violent buffoon did not resonate, but in Rome, for many of these viewers and others, neither would the soldier's integration into citizen marriage and fatherhood; i.e., the Menandrian model.

Plautus' uxorious soldiers expand his genre, engage with his audience to the utmost, and express the broad, messy, but real ways to be a family in Rome of his day.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION:

REPRESENTATION MATTERS

In this dissertation, I have identified two interrelated patterns about young women in Roman comedy: first, a critique of their treatment under *patria potestas* and at the hands of citizen men, and then alternate models of female-led and non-citizen households—families of choice—that both protect young women and value them as people. I will use this conclusion to recap these arguments and to discuss their relevance for Plautus' and Terence's audiences. To begin with, Plautus and Terence stage citizen and non-citizen families in ways that prompt viewers to see the problems and failings caused by the traditional structure of the Roman family, i.e., a family led by a citizen *paterfamilias* wielding *patria potestas*. A powerful vehicle for their critique is to stage the danger of *patria potestas* to the citizen daughter, who is the most vulnerable member of the citizen family, and hence deserves special protection and care by her kin. Other than Plautus' *Trinummus* and Chremes in Terence's *Andria* (important in their own right as models of exemplary treatment of daughters), the Roman playwrights, but Plautus in particular, stage citizen men who endanger their daughters for the sake of their own gain.

These examples create a critique of defective citizen fatherhood all on their own, a critique that is even sharper when juxtaposed with disadvantaged (i.e., non-citizen) families that do much better by daughters. Plautus and Terence both stage such families. *Meretrices* or

otherwise underprivileged women, and the enslaved women in their households, foster displaced girls, treating them as family, and dedicating themselves to protecting them and respecting their desires. (By contrast, men in the same plays misjudge and mistreat women of all civil statuses.) These female-led families of choice supplement and reinforce Plautus' and Terence's critique of citizen men and citizen fatherhood, by showing other, better ways to treat young women.

These plays also show that non-legal, adoptive, and "found families" may well be more supportive, nourishing, and affectionate than a utilitarian, standardized citizen family, especially to and among vulnerable, disadvantaged, and at-risk members of society (e.g., *meretrices* and especially lost daughters). In this regard, it is especially apt to use the modern term "family of choice" to describe these units, usually used to refer to support networks, strong friendships, and family relationships created among marginalized people, outside the traditional blood-and-marital model of the family.¹ Plautus and Terence would not have known this term, but they stage its life-saving power.

I have also explored another family type, seen only in Plautus, that features young women: the marriage-like relationships of women with foreign soldiers. With these relationships, Plautus stages unconventional families that move entirely beyond the citizen realm. Although the girls are not citizens, they are valued as long-term partners, and their relationships are overwhelmingly described with the language of citizen marriage. The soldiers too are not

¹ For this concept in modern psychology, and gender and sexuality studies, see, e.g., Dewaele (2011, 2016), Stitt (2020, especially 372–74), ALGBTIC Transgender Committee (2009). Stitt discusses the immense diversity of form chosen family can take, as well as the importance of social legitimacy for alternate constructions of family, and the risks members face without such legitimacy. I think seeing relationships like their own on stage might have offered a sense of legitimacy to members of such families in Plautus' and Terence's audience.

citizens.² Plautus' staging of these relationships, which are peripheral to the main action of the plays, shows them as a normalized fact of life in Roman society. This normalizing depiction is unique among our literary and historical evidence from the time period, but aligns with inscriptional evidence from later periods (e.g., Rawson 1974).

But Plautus goes even further: all the plays with a marriage-minded foreign soldier and his non-citizen life partner also feature immature citizen men who are uninterested in marriage and family. In contrast, the soldiers care enough about their relationships to pursue extra-legal marriage and even children. What's more, at times they pursue a specific girl, whom they do not view as interchangeable with another, in order to start a household. The surprising presence of these uxorious soldiers, along with the critique of citizen fatherhood discussed in Chapters Two and Three, shows that the socially valued citizen family is no better—and can, in fact, be even worse (e.g., Saturio in *Persa*; Chremes in *HT*)—than non-citizen and unconventional families, especially when it comes to protection, affection, and care for vulnerable family members.

Before I conclude, an example that sums up many of my arguments and points toward the effect these plays would have had on portions of their audience. Terence's *Self-Tormentor* contains two scenes that illustrate my overall points. At the end, the citizen father Chremes insists his son Clitipho marry. His wife Sostrata suggests a neighbor's daughter, whom Clitipho rejects because of her appearance (1056–62). Sostrata then proposes the daughter of a different neighbor, saying, "I'll get him another girl" (1063, *aliam dabo*). This is how a citizen family—indeed, one in which the father is strikingly harsh and callous—settles marriage in a patriarchal society. As long as a citizen girl is available, it does not matter who she is. Status trumps the individual.

² The soldiers' professions, however, as well as references to the Roman army, would have made their experience relevant to citizen members of the military.

Earlier in the play, however, the same is not true for the unconventional union of the citizen Clinia and Antiphila, who is, unbeknownst to them both, a displaced citizen daughter. Her supposed non-citizen status does not affect the marital nature of their relationship, which Clinia's father call *pro uxore* (104). The *meretrix* Bacchis outlines Antiphila's situation as follows (381–95):

edepol te, mea Antiphila, laudo et fortunatam iudico,
 id quom studuisti isti formae ut mores consimiles forent;
 minumeque, ita me di ament, miror si te sibi quisque expetit.
 nam mihi quale ingenium haberes fuit indicio oratio;
 et quom egomet nunc mecum in animo vitam tuam considero 385
 adeo vostrarum volgus quae ab se segregant,
 et vos esse istius modi et nos non esse haud mirabilest.
 ...
 vobis cum uno semel ubi aetatem agere decretumst viro, 392
 quoius mos maxume consimilis vostrum, hi se ad vos applicant.
 hoc beneficio utrique ab utrisque vero devincimini,
 ut numquam ulla amori vostro incidere possit calamitas. 395

By god, my Antiphila, I praise you and I consider you fortunate, that you have taken care that your character is like your beauty; I don't wonder at all, by the gods, that everyone seeks you for himself. Because in my opinion, your speech is proof of how great your nature is; and now when I think about your life, and of those of you who keep themselves apart from the crowd, it makes sense that you are of that type and we are not.

...
 For you, once you have determined to spend your life with one man, whose character is most like yours, these men attach themselves to you. With this benefit each is truly bound to the other, so that never can any calamity stop your love.

Bacchis views Antiphila's union as unbreakable and exclusive, based on character and compatibility, beneficial and desirable. Antiphila and Clinia have what amounts to a happy marriage to the person of their choice—the opposite of Clinia's forced speed marriage, in which any girl will do. Most significantly, though, Bacchis describes Antiphila's relationship as not unique to her (386). Although Antiphila turns out to be a citizen, Bacchis' point remains

relevant: there are many non-citizen girls like Antiphila who achieve a loving, secure, marriage-like relationship.

In this dissertation, I have shown that Plautus and Terence subversively stage found families that put citizen families, and especially powerful citizen men, to shame by caring for young women and respecting them as individuals. But why does this pattern matter for the historical people watching the plays? To criticize a dominant patriarchal ideology in a public, state-sponsored forum is nothing to sneeze at. But these plays do more. They refract³ and thereby reinforce, normalize, and sustain members of society who did not often see their relationships, families, and loved ones represented and respected in their own society. The Roman playwrights' art allowed unconventional families to see themselves onstage at the big festivals of the Roman *ludi*. Most importantly, Plautus and Terence granted these families the power of seeing themselves and their loved ones not as lesser than the dominant citizen class, but as better: these families demonstrate love and mutual respect among partners, guardians, and children in relationships that sustain the soul and create meaningful, supportive personal lives.

³ I take this term from Konstan, who notes, "Artistic forms act as a prism rather than as a mirror, and shape the images they act upon in accord with their own structure or configuration" (2013, 144). Roman comedy neither reflects reality nor offers a model for it.

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