

A SIGN OF A NEW SPEAKER IN PLAUTUS AND TERENCE?

The phrase *ei mihi* is used fifteen times by Plautus.¹ On all but one occasion these words introduce a new speaker. The single 'exception' is, I suggest, rather an error of transmission. I quote the line in context, *Bac.* 1171–4

NIC. Ni abeas, quamquam tu bella es,
malum tibi magnum dabo iam. *BACCH.* Patiar,
non metuo, ne quid mihi doleat
quod ferias. *NIC.* Ut blandiloquist!
ei mihi, metuo. SOR. Hic magis tranquillust.

1173 non – blandiloquist *uno versu* B 1174 SOROR B: B D²

so Leo and the majority of editors.² Ussing in his edition attributed *ei mihi, metuo* to Bacchis (no. 1).³ While I believe that *ei mihi* here as elsewhere in Plautus indicates a change of speaker, I do not think that either Bacchis spoke these words. In both Plautus and Terence *ei mihi* (and *ei misero mihi*) issues only from the lips of male characters.⁴ In our scene also present is Philoxenus in consort with Soror (i.e. Bacchis no. 2). When Nicobolus threatens to spank Bacchis (no. 1) her response is essentially *non metuo*. Nicobolus reacts *ut blandiloquist!* It is Philoxenus, I suggest, who says *ei mihi, metuo*. Now there is not only the farcical affectation of fear intended to render Nicobolus' threat all the more grave, but the reaction of Soror, *hic magis tranquillust* (where *hic* is, of course, Philoxenus), gains not only in point but in humour: she has taken Philoxenus' words as an indication of tractability!

Recently Otto Zwierlein has pronounced this passage (1170–74) an interpolation.⁵ Much of his argument involves the words *ei mihi metuo*. My proposal, to give these words to Philoxenus, reached before I had seen Zwierlein, removes his chief objection: 'das folgende non metuo der Bacchis nimmt dem ei mihi, metuo des Nicobulus (1172) seine Kraft, vor allem aber bringt jenes vorzeitige ei mihi, metuo den Wendepunkt in der Auseinandersetzung, nämlich den Vers 1196 (quid ago? / quid agas? / rogitas etiam? / lubet et metuo / quid metuis?) um seine Wirkung.' (p. 107).⁶

Further evidence from usage. Like Plautus, Terence uses *ei mihi* fifteen times. Eleven times the words mark a change of speaker.⁷ When this is not the case they begin a new sentence, and always appear at line-end.⁸ In our passage as transmitted *ei mihi* does indeed begin a new sentence, but it does not appear at line-end.

So too with the extended form of this expression, *ei / heu / vae misero mihi*, and its feminine counterpart. In Plautus the masculine form occurs twenty times; twelve

¹ *Am.* 1109; *Aul.* 391, 796; *Bac.* 411 (twice), 1116, 1174; *Men.* 303, 843; *Mil.* 1429; *Mos.* 265 (= *ei mihi misero*), 395, 962, 1030; *St.* 753.

² F. Leo, *Plauti Comoediae* (Berlin, 1873; repr. 1958).

³ J. L. Ussing, T. Macci Plauti Comoediae (Copenhagen, 1875–87); I quote from his note, 'Bacchis haec dicit Nicobulum aut pugno aut sublato baculo sibi minantem timere se simulans; sed verisimile est ante haec excidisse minax aliquod Nicobuli verbum.' (vol. 2, p. 449).

⁴ As is noted (e.g.) by J. N. Adams, *Antichthon* 18 (1984) p. 55. This reference and the one to Zwierlein (n. 5 below) I owe to the anonymous referee of *CQ*.

⁵ Otto Zwierlein, *Zur Kritik und Exegese des Plautus IV* (Stuttgart, 1992) pp. 106–08.

⁶ Also answered is the objection to *hic magis tranquillust* which, if I am correct, is a reaction to Philoxenus' lament: 'Untragbar ist ja auch der weder nach vorne noch nach hinten verbundene Einwurf hic magis tranquillust durch die Schwester in 1174, der lediglich wiederholt, was wir schon aus der Unterredung der beiden Bacchides in 1150f. wissen.'

⁷ *An.* 322, 622; *H.T.* 247, 968; *Ph.* 671, 1004; *Ad.* 124, 242, 323, 753, 789.

⁸ *Ad.* 452; *An.* 263; *Hec.* 366 where conventionally a colon precedes, but where *ei mihi* seems to me to be a parenthesis and, as such, tantamount to a new sentence; *Ph.* 607.

times it marks a change of speaker;⁹ eight times the words begin a new sentence, and in this case always occur at the end of the line.¹⁰ The feminine expression occurs four times; once it marks a change of speaker (*Mer.* 770); three times it begins a new sentence (*Am.* 1057; *Mer.* 681, 701). All four examples occur at line-end.¹¹ Terence has six examples of the masculine form and two of the feminine.

Four times a new speaker is marked;¹² four times a new sentence.¹³ Again, in the latter case the words always appear at line-end.

In sum, the expressions *ei mihi* and its extended forms, in both Plautus and Terence, always either mark a new speaker, or are placed at the end of the line and mark a new sentence.¹⁴

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⁹ *Am.* 726; *Aul.* 200; *Capt.* 945; *Cas.* 661; *Epid.* 50; *Mer.* 217, 759; *Mil.* 180, 1433; *Mos.* 265, 549; *Tru.* 794.

¹⁰ *Cas.* 574, 848; *ante ei pers. spat. A*; *Mer.* 181, 661, 792; *Poen.* 1379: *ante vae pers. spat. AB*; *Trin.* 907; *Truc.* 342.

¹¹ To these should be added *vae miserae mi* (*Mer.* 708); this unusual form of the exclamation, placed mid-line, marks a new speaker. Terence has the form *vae misero mi* (*Hau.* 250) which also, mid-line, marks a new speaker.

¹² *Ad.* 327; *An.* 302; *Hau.* 234; *Hec.* 605.

¹³ *An.* 743; *Hau.* 917; *Ad.* 301, 383.

¹⁴ Or, if used absolutely as (e.g.) *Cas.* 848, *Trin.* 907, the equivalent of a sentence; cf. on *Hec.* 366 (n. 8 above). I thank the anonymous referee of helpful criticisms and suggestions.

INCEST AND RIDICULE IN THE *POENULUS* OF PLAUTUS

Readers of Plautus' *Poenulus* are struck by the generally 'sympathetic' portrayal of the title character Hanno, a portrayal somewhat surprising to us since the play was produced shortly after the Second Punic War.¹ Contrary to what we might expect, Hanno the Carthaginian is neither villain nor scapegoat, and he even exhibits the Roman virtue of *pietas*.² However, Hanno's portrayal is not wholly positive, for Plautus delineates his character principally by endowing him with the negative stereotypes of Punic physiognomy, dress, speech, and behaviour familiar to his Roman audience.³ Hanno's Punic ethnicity is not merely an incidental matter of fact, as it is with his relative Agorastocles, but an essential part of his characterization that serves to isolate him from all the other characters of the *palliata*. While some of Hanno's vices—deceit, licentiousness, and effeminacy—are not exclusive to Carthaginians and are shared by other Greek characters in the *palliata*, there is one vice peculiar to Hanno. In this paper I argue that Plautus ridicules Hanno through a

¹ For criteria for dating, see K. Schutter, *Quibus annis Comoediae Plautinae primum actum sunt quaeritur* (Groningen, 1952), pp. 119–25. For 'sympathetic', see (e.g.) A. S. Gratwick, *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* ii (Cambridge, 1982), p. 94; W. V. Harris, *Cambridge Ancient History*² viii (Cambridge, 1989), p. 154.

² Note the specific mention of *pietas* at 1137, 1190, 1255, 1277; see also J. A. Hanson, 'Plautus as a Sourcebook for Roman Religion', *TAPA* 90 (1959), 48–101, at p. 92.

³ Punic stature mocked at 1309–10, odour at 1313–14, dress at 975–7, 1008, 1121, 1298, 1303; speech parodied at 990–1028; deceit noted at 111–13, 1032–4, 1106–10, 1124–6, licentiousness at 106–8, 1303, effeminacy at 1311. For prevalent stereotypes of Carthaginians, see E. Burck, 'Das Bild der Karthager in der römischen Literatur', *Rom und Karthago*, ed. J. Vogt (Leipzig, 1943), 297–345; M. Dubuisson, 'L'image du Carthaginois dans la littérature latine', *Studia Phoenicia* 2 (1983), 159–67; K. Christ, 'Zum Beurteilung Hannibals', *Historia* 17 (1968), 461–95.