XXIX. The *Amphitruo* of Plautus and Euripides' *Bacchae*

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Leo once wrote that Plautus' *Amphitruo* "had a tragic prototype which is lost to us."[1] Apparently he meant an ultimate source, not an immediate model, for he tried subsequently to show that the *Amphitruo* was based on two Greek comedies inexpertly joined at lines 628–60.[2] No one would deny that the *Amphitruo* is an anomaly among extant Latin comedies.[3] Critics have differed only in emphasizing aspects of its uniqueness which relate to their own special interests: its mythological plot, the gods among its active characters, its extensive tragic parodies, the mystery of its sources (it is one of two plays for which a derivation from Middle Comedy has been seriously suggested), the grave and noble manner of its heroine, its nearly tragic action and tone,[4] its unparalleled popularity in later ages.[5] Even the speaker of the prologue recognized the novelty of the comedy which he was introducing: he called it first a tragedy and then compromised with *tragicomoedia*, the unique occurrence of this term in classical literature.

". . . which is lost to us," wrote Leo. And even Palmer, who pointed in his perceptive notes to two passages adapted from Euripides' *Bacchae*,[6] did not see that the imitation of the *Bacchae*

[1] F. Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen*[2] (Berlin 1912) 133.

[2] *GöttNachr* (1911), 254–62; *Plaut. Forsch.*[2] 185, note 2, a reply to Wilamowitz, *SBBerlin* (1911), 485–6; *Geschichte d. römischen Literatur* I (Berlin 1913) 131–2, esp. 132, note 1, a reply to H. W. Prescott, *CP* 8 (1913) 14–22.

[3] Since the publication of G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton 1952) any discussion of Plautus can be relieved of cumbrous detail by general reference to that work. Its author reviews with admirable clarity, accuracy and completeness modern work on all aspects of Roman comedy and its background, and an elaborate index makes information easily available. I refer silently to it throughout this paper for detailed confirmation of general statements or acknowledged facts.

[4] Leo (above, note 1) 134: "Um sich dem tragischen Stil zu nähern . . ."

[5] An excellent review and study by L. R. Shero, *TAPA* 87 (1956) 192–238; add an informative little article by W. B. Sedgwick, "The History of a Latin Comedy," *Rev. of English Studies* 3 (1927) 346–9.

[6] A. Palmer *ed.*, *The Amphitruo of Plautus* (London 1890) *ad* 1.1.203 (357) and 5.1.14 (1066). Referred to henceforth as Palmer.

was certainly a conscious one and that the whole of the *Amphitruo*, but especially the last part, is constructed in imitation of the first half of Euripides' tragedy. Demonstration of this fact must precede discussion of its implications.

Much of the argument can be made clear merely by reviewing the plots of the two plays. The action of the *Bacchae* is set at Thebes, in front of a large building, the palace of king Pentheus and his family. A man steps forward and speaks a kind of prologue, explaining that he is a god, Dionysus, disguised in human form; in the ensuing action he will avenge his slight at the hands of Pentheus by throwing the city, and especially the king's family, into confusion; already he has driven the women of Thebes, led by the king's mother, Agave, and her sisters, in Bacchic frenzy to the nearby slopes of Cithaeron. He leaves the stage, where songs of praise by the chorus of Asian Bacchae and preparations by Cadmus and blind Tiresias to depart for the Dionysiac dance are interrupted by the sudden entrance of Pentheus; while away from the country (*ekdêmos ôn*) he has heard that a foreign sorcerer in the shape of a handsome youth has bewitched the women of the city and of the royal family, who have been persuaded to profligate behavior; he has returned to punish the women and the stranger, and with bitter words watches the old men leave. The stranger, captured and brought before Pentheus, engages with him in a dialogue full of ironic overtones, for the mortal does not know that he is questioning a god. The king in fury orders the smiling stranger taken off to chains in the stable, and with threats of slavery for the Asian women he himself follows, leaving the chorus to sing of their helplessness and fear. Suddenly the earth trembles, the palace shakes, a fiery burst of light shimmers, the god's voice is heard, and the chorus sinks to the ground in terror. The stranger, emerging from the palace, with reassuring words bids them rise; he explains that he had miraculously escaped his chains, that Pentheus, threatening destruction, had rushed in mounting frenzy with drawn sword into the palace, but had fallen exhausted to the ground after the earthquake and fiery brightness. The king now reappears from the palace, hears a detailed report from a messenger of the frenzied depredations of the queen-mother and her followers, and is slowly driven mad as he talks with the disguised god, who persuades him to put on the female attire of a bacchant and go

to spy on the Theban women. The remainder of the play—Pentheus' dreadful fate, the madness and punishment of Agave—does not concern us here, except to note that the god appears once more at the end to foretell to the principals their fate.

The *Amphitruo* too is placed at Thebes in front of a large dwelling (one might think of it, as Duckworth noted, as a palace).[7] The prologue is spoken by a man who explains that he is a god, Mercury, disguised as a human being; he is keeping watch in the form of the slave Sosia while his father, Jupiter, also in human disguise as Amphitruo, enjoys a night in the house with Ampitruo's wife, Alcumena. The real Sosia arrives from the port, sent ahead to announce the triumphant return of Amphitruo from foreign war, but in a long interchange with Mercury is beaten, confused, and finally sent back to the port. The disguised god now continues, as it were, his prologue, explaining that Jupiter will bring confusion upon the household and altercation between Alcumena and her husband, but will reveal all in the end and arrange for a birth of twins, one his own son, the other Amphitruo's. Jupiter appears at the door with Alcumena, bids her farewell with the coming dawn, and departs with Mercury. Shortly Amphitruo, hurrying home with Sosia, who has told him of the other Sosia, finds Alcumena at the door, amazed of course that her husband should return so quickly. In growing anger and confusion Amphitruo first thinks his wife mad, then unfaithful and bewitched by some sorcerer. As he rushes away to find one of her kinsmen, Jupiter re-enters, pretends the quarrel has been a joke, and sends Sosia to summon the pilot from the harbor; secretly telling Mercury to keep Amphitruo from the house, he goes in with Alcumena. Pretending to be drunk, Mercury climbs to the roof and drives Amphitruo from the door after his return. In the next scenes, which are largely lost through damage to the archetypal manuscript, Sosia returns with the pilot, and Alcumena and Jupiter are summoned to the door; at last the god confronts his victim in a dialogue in which mutual accusations of madness and profligacy end (as does the lacuna) with the mystified departure of the pilot (and, probably earlier, Sosia) and the discomfiture of Amphitruo, now deserted on the stage as Jupiter follows Alcumena inside. In a paroxysm of rage he decides

[7] Duckworth (above, note 3) 83.

to burst into the house, avenge himself on the foreign magician who has deranged the minds of his whole household, and kill anyone who stands in his way. But at that moment a shattering thunderbolt striking the house fells him to the ground, where he is still lying when a woman appears from the door. Inside, she tells the audience, everything had thundered and shaken, a flaming light had appeared, all had cowered in terror, but the voice of the god had been heard with reassuring words bidding the servants rise.[8] The importance and humor of the next words are apparent only if one remembers that in the *Bacchae* Dionysus is continually—almost excessively—called Bromius.[9] The woman, rousing Amphitruo, answers his dazed question with, "I'm your servant Bromia." A short exchange about sanity and madness follows; the servant describes the birth of the twins and its aftermath; Jupiter appears once more to explain the past and to foretell future glory; the play ends in reconciliation.

The presence of two gods in disguise has complicated the action of Plautus' play; Alcumena corresponds only in one aspect of her role—as the object of Amphitruo's anger and suspicion—to Agave; the spirit is comic and the resolution happy. But it is surely clear that in its setting, in many of its themes, in the development of its action, and especially in its climax the *Amphitruo* is a reflection of the *Bacchae*; and the humor of the climactic scene depends in part upon a recognition of that relationship.

As one might expect, there are several details which emphasize, or help to reveal, this aspect of the play. Let us leave aside for the moment the question of whether one can assume familiarity with the *Bacchae* in a Roman audience: the author of the supposed Greek original would be just as likely to give some indications of his Euripidean model in the course of the play. It is not worth while pausing over traits of language and sentiment which find parallels in the *Bacchae*, but are common Euripidean or Hellenistic material, such as the suspicion and contempt which both Pentheus

[8] At this point, in short, what happens on the stage in the *Bacchae* (the reassuring words of the god to the women cowering in terror of the noise and light), is described as off-stage action in the *Amphitruo*, while what was described in the *Bacchae* as off-stage action (the enraged resolve of the master of the house to rush inside and his stunned fall to the ground at the epiphany) has occurred on-stage in the *Amphitruo*.

[9] 20 times, as compared with Bacchius (13), Bacchus (2), Euius (2), Dithyrambus (1.) He is called Dionysus 32 times. I follow the text and interpretations of E. R. Dodds, *ed.*, *Euripides: Bacchae* (Oxford 1944).

and Amphitruo show on occasion for women (esp. *Amph.* 836, *Bacch.* 785–6)[10] or the discussion of force and truth in the relation of a servant to a master (*Amph.* 590–1, *Bacch.* 668–73). There are several real parallels. First, the prologue spoken by a god disguised as a human being and his announcement that gods will take active part with ordinary mortals in the ensuing plot touch at once on two characteristics unique to the *Bacchae* among extant Greek tragedies.[11] Although gods were introduced into Old Comedy, Mercury has already made it clear that this is to be a tragedy, a tragedy turned into a comedy by divine fiat, but "with the lines all remaining the same" (55). Secondly, it has often been observed that the *Bacchae* itself is heightened in its dramatic terror (rather like Shakespeare's *King Lear*) by a grimly ironic or painfully ridiculous humor.[12] In the course of the *Amphitruo* use is made of each of these humorous devices. In the most memorably chilling lines of Dionysus' final exchange with Pentheus he says: φερόμενος ἥξεις . . . Pentheus: ἁβρότητ' ἐμὴν λέγεις. Dionysus: ἐν χερσὶ μητρός. Pentheus: καὶ τρυφᾶν μ'ἀναγκάσεις (968–9). In the opening dialogue between Mercury and Sosia—resembling in basic situation those between Dionysus and Pentheus—Mercury says: *Faciam ego hodie te superbum, nisi hinc abis.* Sosia: *Quonam modo?* Mercury: *Auferere, non abibis, si ego fustem sumpsero* (357–8).[13] Comic pun has been directly adapted from tragic irony. In both plays the participation of a god in the dialogue gives opportunities for ambiguous reference to gods. Pentheus asks, for example, about Dionysus: καὶ ποῦ 'στιν; οὐ γὰρ φανερὸς ὄμμασιν γ'ἐμοῖς. Dionysus replies: παρ'ἐμοί· σὺ δ'ἀσεβὴς αὐτὸς ὢν οὐκ εἰσορᾷς (501–2). Similarly, to comic effect, when Mercury proposes a truce, Sosia asks: *Tuae fide credo?* Mercury: *Meae.* Sosia: *Quid si falles?* Mercury: *Tum Mercurius Sosiae iratus siet* (391–2). Or better, Mercury's oath: *At ego per Mercurium iuro, tibi Iouem non credere* (436).[14]

[10] A commonplace in late drama generally; see, e.g., Duckworth (above, note 3) 23–4 (Antiphanes), W. Schmid in Schmid-Stählin, *Geschichte d. griechischen Literatur* I.3 (Munich 1940) 320–2 (Euripides), and Ribbeck's parallels *ad* Ennius, *fr. inc.* 45 R³.

[11] The first characteristic was probably found nowhere else, the second perhaps in Aeschylus' Lycurgus-plays, which lie behind Euripides' drama; see Schmid (above, note 10), 658–9.

[12] Schmid (above, note 10) 668, note 7; 676; 768.

[13] I follow the text of F. Leo *ed.*, *Plauti comoediae* I (Berlin 1895).

[14] Similarly 831–4 (with double ambiguity), 933–4, 1021–2.

There is even, finally, in Sosia's pun on *uir* a humorous reference to the change of a hero into a woman which is such a striking feature of the *Bacchae: Haeret haec res, si quidem haec iam mulier facta est ex uiro* (814).[15]

Thirdly, Amphitruo and Sosia have both, like Pentheus, returned from foreign parts to find a disturbing stranger; like Pentheus, both of them insist that the stranger is a magician. Pentheus calls him γόης ἐπῳδὸς Λυδίας ἀπὸ χθονός (234). Sosia after only a few words with Mercury declares that he is *superstitiosus* (323);[16] Amphitruo is sure that if Sosia hasn't been drinking he has been bewitched: *huic homini nescio quid est mali mala obiectum manu* (605); he openly declares that a magician (*praestigiator*) is affecting his wife (830). The loss of the scene in which Jupiter and Amphitruo face each other is here, as elsewhere in this discussion, a special handicap, since there one might expect frequent parallels. But the kind of interchange is clear from the speech of the enraged Amphitruo which follows immediately: *ego pol illum ulciscar hodie Thessalum ueneficum* (1043), where the "foreign" and "enchanting" elements are combined, as in the Greek. The charge of sorcery spreads even to the women: Alcumena, Sosia is sure, must be a witch (*praestigiatrix* 782), and Amphitruo accuses her of trying to enchant himself and Sosia: *nam haec quidem nos delirantis facere dictis postulat* (789).[17] Here again a meaningful name is used. There is no special reason to name the silent servant who fetches the golden bowl secretly stolen by the god; but just as the two men are already suspicious of witchcraft, Alcumena turns and asks "Thessala" by name to bring it in (770). The Thessalians were notorious for their sorcery.[18] Like that of Bromia later this name is introduced merely for the humor given it by its context.[19]

[15] Pentheus: ἐς γυναῖκας ἐξ ἀνδρὸς τελῶ; (822), and 912–44.

[16] See Palmer's note (above, note 6).

[17] *dictis*: "with her words" or, in a particular sense, making a kind of pun, "with her spells" or "with her charms"; that is, with verbal magic as distinguished from motions, elixirs, etc. Cf. *uoce* in Horace, *Epod.* 5.45–6: *quae sidera excantata uoce Thessala lunamque caelo deripit.* It takes on something of the color of *maledictis* from the context (for which see other examples in *ThLL* 5.991.65 ff.). Leo (above, note 13), not seeing the connection, suspected the word (*adn. crit.*: *non aptum uidetur*).

[18] Cf. *Thessalum ueneficum* (1043), with Palmer's note (above, note 6); see Kiessling-Heinze *ad* Horace, *Carm.* 1.27.21.

[19] These may be added to the significant names noted by Duckworth (above, note 3) 346–9, though the classification "Comic Formations" is wrong. For a good recent

The theme of the Bacchae is pre-eminently that of possession by Dionysus, whether in the form of madness or of drunkenness; and Pentheus goes through a variety of relationships to that experience: when he thinks he is sane and opposing irrationality and vice he is called deranged by Tiresias, Cadmus and the god (269–71, 332, 359, 504–6); when he is at last deranged, the god tells him that before his mind was unsound, but now his wits are in order (947–8). By far the most important links which relate the *Amphitruo* to the Greek play are its continual references to madness and drunkenness, especially those lines in which Sosia advises that Alcumena be treated like a bacchant possessed (*Bacchae bacchanti* 703).[20] The first reference to drunkenness comes early in the play, when Sosia, noticing that the stars are not moving, says: *Credo ego hac noctu Nocturnum obdormiuisse ebrium* (272), and again: *Credo edepol equidem dormire Solem, atque adpotum probe* (282). Mercury is indignant that he should think the gods similar to himself. The passage has particular point, for it appears likely that Nocturnus is none other than Dionysus, here referred to by a translation of his epithet *nyktelios*.[21] It is in the ensuing dialogue that the first reference to insanity occurs, when Mercury says: *Hic homo sanus non est.* Sosia: *Quod mihi praedicas uitium, id tibi est* (402). It seems unnecessary to point out the numerous places where drunkenness is instanced or acted: in his dialogue with the bewildered Sosia, Amphitruo thinks him first drunk (*ebrius* 574), then crazy (*pestis* 581, *dictis delirantibus* 585b). It is worth noting, however, that the theme of madness or possession becomes the leading feature of Amphitruo's exchange with his

review of "meaningful names," especially of Greek origin, see W. M. Seaman, *CJ* 50 (1954–5) 115–9. Both women belong to a class of characters who need not be named in Roman comedy: D. M. Key, *The Introduction of Characters by Name in Greek and Roman Comedy* (Chicago 1923) 81. Bromia, further, is one of only eight characters in Roman Comedy introduced solely as an assistant in detection of *error*: M. F. Smith, *The Technique of Solution in Roman Comedy* (Chicago 1940) 65.

[20] This passage has been one of those cited from Plautus to show familiarity with Bacchic rites in Rome, most recently by M. P. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age* (Lund 1957) 12–4; similarly H. Janne, *RBP* 12 (1933) 527–9 and L. Herrmann, *AntCl* 17 (1948) 318–9. They are not, however, proof of actual contact. Especially as reflected in Plautus the familiarity might have come from appearance and description of bacchants in productions of (translated) Greek tragedies, e.g., Livius' *Ino*, Naevius' *Lycurgus*, Ennius' *Athamas*, Pacuvius' *Antiopa* and *Pentheus*; see O. Köhler in Brix-Niemeyer-Köhler *edd.*, *Plauti Miles gloriosus* (Leipzig-Berlin 1916) *ad* 1016, and below, p. 363.

[21] A discussion of this question will appear elsewhere.

wife and was prominent in the scene between Amphitruo and Jupiter, to judge from the existing fragments. Amphitruo makes the keynote early in the scene: *Haec quidem deliramenta loquitur*; to which Sosia replies: *Paulisper mane, dum edormiscat unum somnum* (696–7). Since *edormire* is used quite regularly for "sleeping off" the effects of wine, Sosia's implication is clear.[22] It is only a few lines later that he gives his master advice on how to treat a raving bacchant (703–5). From this point the two men assume that Alcumena is deranged (*stultitia* 709, *insania* 719, *delirat, atra bili* 727, *delirantis* 728, *impliciscier* 729, *pro cerrita circumferri* 776, *laruarum plenast* 777, *frustratur* 830), then suspect each other (Sosia: *Tu quoque etiam insanis* 753, Amphitruo: *Tu quoque huius adiuuas insaniam* 798) and think she may be putting an enchantment on them (*nam haec quidem nos delirantis facere dictis postulat* 789, *delenitus sum profecto* 844). Amphitruo's charges of mental derangement and moral turpitude parallel those made by Pentheus.

Despite the loss of the particularly relevant scene in which Jupiter and Amphitruo meet (following 1034) the lines quoted from it by grammarians show parts of its development clearly. In two of them (7 [6 Leo]) and 12 [8 Leo]) there are the same words and accusations which appeared earlier on the lips of Amphitruo, but here probably directed against him (*laruatu's, aut laruatus aut cerritus es*). Yet another parallel with the *Bacchae* is found in the comparison of the disturbance to a disease. Pentheus spoke of the stranger: ὃς ἐσφέρει νόσον καινὴν γυναιξί (353–4); in the *Amphitruo* someone says to get a doctor (fr.7) and treat the *aduenienti morbo* (fr. 12).[23]

These are the principal details in which the relation of the *Amphitruo* to the *Bacchae* is stressed or, it might be more accurate to say, revealed. The sooner an audience recognized that there was such a relationship, the greater the interest in seeing it unfold; and indeed the humor of the Bromia-scene is dependent on this recognition. In discussing these details, however, I should not want to obscure the basis upon which the relationship really

[22] See Palmer's note (above, note 6).

[23] Hermolaus Barbarus (1454–93) filled the lacuna with a version of his own, probably in preparation for a performance (Politian, *Epist.* 12.23); it appears in J. Naudet *ed.*, *M. Accii Plauti Comoediae* I (Paris 1830) and in earlier printed editions generally. It is interesting to see that he had noted the references to Bacchus and Bacchic possession in the play and greatly emphasized them in his supplement.

stands, the broad parallel of situation and of development of the action with its climax in the epiphany.[24] It may well seem too much to expect that an audience would recognize the parallels from the indications which I have outlined. It is quite possible to think of them as part of a dramatic scaffolding borrowed from the *Bacchae* which was not intended for immediate recognition, but which has helped to give the *Amphitruo* its reputation for craftsmanship among Latin comedies. Alternatively, Plautus or his source may have had reason to expect more than one performance of the play and a recognition on second hearing of overtones unnoticed at first. What must be assumed, however, is a special familiarity with the *Bacchae* either in the Roman audience or, if complete dependence on a Greek source is assumed, in a Hellenistic Greek audience. Of the latter there is fortunately no doubt, since the *Bacchae* was one of the most read and most often produced plays in the period and continued later to exert its influence in Latin translations or adaptions.[25] In showing the connection, then, between the *Amphitruo* and Euripides' play one is dealing with a sufficiently motivated dramatic reality, not with a literary exercise in recondite allusion.

Needless to say, the conclusions which might be drawn for literary history from the relation of the *Amphitruo* to the *Bacchae* are not unambiguous. All the problems of originality, *contaminatio*, date and background remain. I should like to do no more than summarize in the light of that relation some of the important questions, with suggestions for their solution.

Leo felt a distinct division of the *Amphitruo* into two parts, a division which he attributed to the use of two Greek comedies of different subject-matter as models.[26] He commented on the unity of action which he felt held together the last three acts (861–1146) and tried to show that a play concerned with the

[24] The scenes in both plays show elements typical of divine epiphanies in ancient literature, especially the voice and the brightness (Pfister in *RE Suppl* 4 [1924] 277–305, 314–6), but in the numerous accounts of Heracles' birth or attack by the serpents the unusual light is mentioned elsewhere only in Theocritus 24.22 and 38–9 in quite different circumstances (A. Cartault, *L'Amphitryon de Plaute et la légende de la naissance d'Héraklès* [Paris 1893] 3–21, 31). It is possibly to de-emphasize the real circumstances of the scene that Hercules is never named in the *Amphitruo*, a strange omission.

[25] See Schmid (above, note 10) 681–2 and esp. works cited on 681, note 9.

[26] Above, note 2. Others had taken this combination for granted; see Shero (above, note 5) 204, note 18.

"long night" of generation of Heracles and the deluding of Amphitryon had been combined with a (coarser?) play about the deluding of Amphitryon and the birth of the sons. He was troubled, as many have been, by the inconsistency of the long night with the day of birth, though strangely he left an equal inconsistency, the regular presence of Jupiter in disguise during Amphitryon's absence, in one of the plays of his solution.[27] Although the evidences for a poorly constructed transition which Leo thought to find in 628–60 were shown to be illusory,[28] he was right to point out in Jupiter's speech (861–81) the statement of two quite distinct reasons for bringing help to Alcumena. The first:

> Simul Alcumenae, quam uir insontem probri
> Amphitruo accusat, ueni ut auxilium feram:
> nam mea sit culpa, quod egomet contraxerim,
> si id Alcumenae innocenti expetat.
>
> 869–72

The second:

> Atque Alcumenae in tempore auxilium feram
> faciamque ut uno fetu et quod grauida est uiro
> et me quod grauidast pariat sine doloribus.
>
> 877–9

The first seems to be directed toward a play in which the dénouement is the clarification of Alcumena's situation, the other toward one in which the climax is the birth of the sons. It is quite true that in the *Amphitruo* both of these events are part of the finale and might well have been so in its supposed model; but the possibility of a dichotomy, if only in the original inspiration, is perfectly clear. Leo's intuition of unity in the latter half of the play finds indeed some confirmation in the analysis presented above. Although there are bits of relevant material earlier, the parallelism with the *Bacchae* in theme and development becomes especially close with Amphitruo's arrival from the port, corresponding to the arrival of Pentheus from outside the country. The doubling of the disguised god doubled the opportunities for joking. There is no doubt that it is one more use of the

[27] *GöttNachr* 1911, 260. Cartault (above, note 24) 21–32 had long before summarized all the obvious difficulties and inconsistencies and intelligently discussed possible reasons for them.

[28] By Prescott (above, note 2); see Duckworth (above, note 3) 123.

successful theme found in the *Menaechmi* and *Comedy of Errors*. But it made a large early section of the Latin play a somewhat static doublet of the main action, which reflects the *Bacchae*. But this action too, which begins in earnest about halfway through the play and continues to the end (676–1146),[29] contains in the figure of Alcumena an element quite absent from Euripides' play and foreign to it. She is also, as has been frequently noted, unique in Roman comedy both in the accusations of adultery directed at her, a matron, and in the nobility of speech and manner with which she meets them. One is tempted to see in her a borrowing from some other tragedy, and a likely source is not far to seek. Several fragments of Euripides' *Alcmene* are preserved, though they are insufficient for reconstruction of the action or characterization. It is reasonably clear from prose versions of the myth, however, and especially from two vase paintings, one well labelled, of the climactic scene, that Alcmene, who had been visited by Zeus in her husband's form, was accused by the latter of infidelity and threatened with death. She was saved from burning alive at an altar only by a thundershower, which was probably followed by the appearance of Zeus as *deus ex machina* to make suitable explanations and prophecies.[30] It would stretch the evidence to say any more than that the situation of the *Alcmene* makes possible a noble heroine defending her unjustly injured honor in the best Euripidean manner and that such a heroine would be an obvious model for the Alcumena who appears in Plautus. It would be little more than guesswork to suggest that Sosia's sententious remarks on the relations of servants to

[29] It seems to me likely that Leo was here and elsewhere misled in his analysis of the play by thinking in terms of acts and scenes; the unity he claimed for the last three acts really begins well before the beginning of the traditional Act 3 (861). In the complete play it would have been almost exactly halfway. It is thought that the pre-Carolingian archetype of the Palatine recension resembled generally the Ambrosian palimpsest, though with doubts about the number of lines per page (W. M. Lindsay, *The Ancient Editions of Plautus* [Oxford 1904] 79). The loss of a quaternion would then have removed about 304 lines, though possibly some 38 less, in view of E. M. Lowe's warning about blank pages at beginning and end of quires in early manuscripts (*Cod. Lat. Ant.* 1 [Oxford 1934] x). The addition of 300 lines would make it barely the longest play of Plautus (*Miles gloriosus* = 1437).

[30] Nauck, *TGF*[2] frs. 88–104; Schmid (above, note 10) 416; vases first explained correctly by R. Engelmann, *AnnIst* 44 (1872) 5–18; excellent reproduction of labelled vase in *JHS* 11 (1890) Pl VI, with discussion by A. S. Murray, 225–30; both vases shown in L. Séchan, *Études sur la tragédie grecque dans ses rapports avec la céramique* (Paris 1926) 244 and facing 242.

masters (590–1) reflect what seems to be a similar discussion in the *Alcmene* (fr. 93 N²). It is true that early in the play Sosia makes an offhand remark which may have been intended as a reference to the "tripling" of the night, a well known feature of the Alcmene-Amphitryon story: *Nam continuas has tris noctes peruigilaui* (314), but the humor does not necessarily depend on knowledge of that numerical detail.[31] So any attempt to show that the first half of the *Amphitruo* parallels parts of the *Alcmene* in the same way that the second half parallels the *Bacchae* will rest on mere conjecture, although it has in its favor some of the considerations raised by Leo.[32]

Mention of Euripides' *Alcmene* brings us at once to a different problem. Heretofore the question of the audience to whom the parallels with the *Bacchae* were meant to appeal has been left quite open. One can assume either that Plautus translated a comedy which had amused a Greek public with its echoes, but was lost in this respect on the Roman audience, or that he knew that he could count on recognition in his own public of references to Greek tragedy. With this question is involved of course some judgment of Plautus' originality. In 240 B.C. the Senate had voted to include in the *ludi Romani* Greek plays (*ludi Graeci*), which were then to take their place beside the older Latin entertainment (*ludi Latini*, later to include *fabulae praetextae* and *togatae*) as a regular part not only of the *ludi Romani* (and the single day was soon extended to four) but also of other games in increasing number with the years.[33] The first Greek plays were translations by Livius Andronicus from Attic drama, and the meaning of *ludi Graeci* was quite obviously the tragedies translated by such figures as Livius, Naevius, Ennius and Pacuvius and the comedies of Naevius, Plautus, Caecilius, Terence and others. By 190 B.C., fifty years later, there were at least six days a year regularly given to dramatic productions and usually many

[31] Versions of the lengthening of the night discussed by Cartault (above, note 24) 14–5, more briefly by Leo (above, note 27) 254, note 1, who did not notice Sosia's reference, which he might have used to support his theory.

[32] In this regard one minor point has gone unnoticed. Jupiter calls emphatic attention to the coming dawn as he ends his night of dalliance (533, 543, 546–7). That would be the hour when the action of Leo's first play might reach its climax. On the Alcmene-vase (above, note 30) Eos is clearly marked as an attendant figure at the climax of that play.

[33] G. Wissowa, *Religion u. Kultus d. Römer*² (Munich 1912) 462–4.

more.[34] It is important to observe that the Greek origin of the plays was kept in view, as we can see not only from the easy reference to Greek authors and their plays in prologues but also in the continuing terminology, *ludi Graeci*.[35] There seems to me little doubt, therefore, that when Sceparnio in the *Rudens* calls the storm of the night before *non uentus . . . uerum Alcumena Euripidi* (86) he is not referring to a play and author unknown to his audience. The opposite view involves a false assumption, either that the public knew no Greek tragedy (and would miss the whole reference) or that Plautus was an inferior craftsman (and would leave in his play a joke meant for Greek ears which his audience would only vaguely understand).[36] The most reasonable conclusion would be that a translation of Euripides' *Alcmene* had been presented in recent memory when the *Rudens* was written. For what it is worth, every scholar who has dealt with Plautine chronology in the last hundred years has put the *Amphitruo* later than the *Rudens*.[37] So we may assume with less than usual hesitation that Euripides' portrayal at least of the figure and story of Alcmene was known to the Roman audience which attended the *Amphitruo*. In the prologue of the *Amphitruo*, moreover, Mercury speaks of the appearance of Jupiter on the stage "last year" (*anno*) when the actors asked his aid:

> Ipse hanc acturust Iuppiter comoediam.
> quid? admirati estis? quasi uero nouom
> nunc proferatur, Iouem facere histrioniam;
> etiam, histriones anno cum in proscaenio hic
> Iouem inuocarunt, uenit, auxilio is fuit.
> 88–92

[34] C. H. Buck, *A Chronology of the Plays of Plautus* (Baltimore 1940) 10–11, 17; M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater* (Princeton 1939) 307.

[35] Wissowa (above, note 33) 46; reference to Greek dramatists or plays in 10 of the 17 prologues of Plautus and Terence (excluding the doubtful *Vidularia*).

[36] This latter view, a common one for two generations, especially among German scholars, seems to me untenable. Prescott was its most energetic opponent, and it has generally lost ground before his criticisms and the work of those who have followed him. One important inconsistency, obvious in the present example, was the claim that Plautus would go to any lengths to raise a laugh, yet would leave in his play something which his audience didn't understand; see below, page 372. K. H. E. Schutter, *Quibus annis comoediae Plautinae primum actae sint quaeritur* (Groningen 1952) xxx, seems to have been led into a captious questioning of the existence of such a play by a mistaken note in Buck (above, note 34) 98, note 1.

[37] Their views are gathered conveniently in Schutter (previous note) xii–xxvii, but Sedgwick's revised chronology should be added from *AJP* 70 (1949) 379.

It is worth while giving the passage in full, for the insistence on Jupiter's actual role and presence refutes in itself Lindsay's suggestion that Arcturus is meant and the distant influence of Jupiter in the *Rudens*.[38] As Buck has said, "The obvious interpretation of the speech is that Jupiter had appeared recently in a tragedy in the capacity of a *deus ex machina*."[39] Now the number of tragedies in which he might have appeared in such a role is very limited—nowhere, for instance, in extant Greek drama. In fact the only known tragedy in which it seems likely that he was the *deus ex machina* is the *Alcmene*.[40] It is therefore an attractive possibility that the *Alcumena* of an undetermined Roman playwright had made a great impression with its final scene about a year before the *Amphitruo* and within a short time of the *Rudens*. No one who has worked in recent years on the chronology of the plays will dispute the resulting proximity of these two, though there would be much less agreement on the decade in which to place them.[41]

Parody or imitation of tragedy has often been seen in the *Amphitruo*, sometimes in an effort to date it.[42] This would not be the only Plautine comedy in which reflection of some well known tragic production has been suspected, but until now it has been hard to name a specific model.[43] Some of the passages are among those explained in the analysis above; others, thought to

[38] W. M. Lindsay, *CQ* 14 (1920) 49.

[39] *Op. cit.* (above, note 34) 98, with approval of Schutter (above, note 36) 3.

[40] From among the famous tragedians one needs to look for an example mainly in Euripides. There were many, no doubt, in the hundreds of plays by other poets which have disappeared, but the early tragedies used in Rome appear to have come principally from the three tragedians who have survived. Of his known plays the appearance of Zeus seems a good possibility elsewhere only in the *Danaë*, but those who have discussed the evidence have favored a different divinity; see Schmid (above, note 10) 596.

[41] I have no desire to involve myself in what A. Ernout, *RevPhil* 27 (1953) 104 has rightly called insoluble questions. Schutter's (above, note 36) criticisms of his predecessors are effective because in the long run the whole answer is, strictly speaking, *non liquet*. Schutter's own (p. 13) acceptance of P. J. Enk's arguments regarding the *Amphitruo* (*Handboek d. Latijnse Letterkunde* 2.1 [Zutphen 1937] 149–50) will satisfy few critics. I lean toward a later date because of possible use of Pacuvius (see next paragraph).

[42] One of the early and best treatments was that of G. Lafaye, *Rev. d. cours et conf.* 2.2 (Paris 1894) 234–42.

[43] Duckworth (above, note 3) 335, note 16 (scene of pretended madness in the *Menaechmi*); cf. passages collected by Ribbeck, *TRF*^{2} 269; W. B. Sedgwick, *CQ* 21 (1927) 88–9.

depend directly on works now lost, are too hedged with conjecture to be discussed with profit. One suspects, for example, a ridiculing of epic or tragic *lexis* in Sosia's comments on some of Mercury's first words to him: the voice which has "flown to" his ears (*aduolauit* 325) or "pounds" them (*uerberat* 333), or "you who carry Vulcan enclosed in a horn" (*qui Volcanum in cornu conclusum geris* 341). But except for the obvious Homeric phrases, Euripides' *ptênoisi mythois* (*Orestes* 1176), and Ennius' *sed sonitus auris meas pedum pulsu increpat* (*Thyestes* fr. 2 R^3), I find no other parallels than those rightly rejected by Fraenkel, who concluded that these expressions were too common to be decisive.[44] The one passage which stands out is Sosia's lengthy report of the battle against the Teloboae and its aftermath (203–61). Long recognized as a reflection of a herald's speech in tragedy, it was claimed by Fraenkel as an example of the influence of Ennius. A principal difficulty is that it does not in fact closely parallel in detail any preserved fragment of Ennius.[45] Indeed Siewert had already demonstrated that both in form and subject the passage could be shown, for example, to be a parallel to the report of the battle in Euripides' *Heraclidae* (799–866), just as he had shown that in its terminology it was thoroughly Roman. Too much time has been spent by writers before and after Siewert in attempts to make it a "purely Latin" or "purely Greek" derivation. Here, if anywhere, is a clear example of Plautus' genius: to transform something Greek (a herald's speech) into some of the finest Latin of his time, a Latin which shows affinities, as one might expect, with the annalists and with Ennius, that is, with other contemporary literature.[46] No one has ever remarked, however, that the only close parallels in the *Amphitruo* to tragic fragments are to those of

[44] E. Fraenkel, *Plautinisches in Plautus* (=*Philologische Untersuchungen* 28) (Berlin 1922) 104, esp. note 2.

[45] Fraenkel's parallels (above, note 44) 351–2 merely show contemporary poets writing on the same subject; no words or peculiarities of expression are common to both.

[46] P. Siewert, *Plautus in Amphitruone fabula quomodo exemplar Graecum transtulerit* (Leipzig 1894) 73–6 (*Heraclidae*), 35–9 (Roman terms). It has proved more realistic, further, to show that Plautus' description resembles the general usages of the annalists whom Livy reflects in his early books, as do Siewert and Cartault (above, note 24) 23–5, than to try to parallel a particular battle, as do W. Schwering, *Ad Plauti Amphitruonem prolegomena* (Greifswald 1907) 25–47 and Janne (above, note 20) 515–31; the interesting suggestion of L. Halkin, *AntCl* 17 (1948) 297–304, that it is a parody of a general's request for a triumph fits with the former category.

Pacuvius. There are only two. In a phrase of Sosia's report of the battle, *boat caelum fremitu uirum* (232–3), a verb is used which is extremely rare in classical Latin and is found otherwise before Varro only in Pacuvius' *Medus: clamore et sonitu colles resonantes bount* (fr. 6 R³);[47] in Bromia's report of the epiphany her phrase, *strepitus crepitus sonitus tonitrus* (1062), can be compared, as Ribbeck observed, with a phrase from Pacuvius' *Teucer: strepitus fremitus clamor tonitruum* (fr. 15.2 R³). Fraenkel wanted to derive this second pair from a common source, "a celebrated passage in an earlier tragedian, probably Ennius,"[48] but there is no reason to exclude direct reflection of Pacuvius. Born about 220 B.C., son-in-law of Ennius and therefore, unlike Plautus, probably in early contact with literary circles, he may reasonably be supposed to have produced tragedies any time after about 200–195 B.C. Any one of the considerable number (it is agreed) of Plautus' plays later than that period might contain references to Pacuvius' work, and indeed one might expect more frequent comic attention to a new and different writer. So the range of possible sources is wide, and exact parallels are lacking to determine what tragic themes or scenes may be reflected in the earlier parts of the *Amphitruo*, whether from an *Alcumena* or elsewhere.

The point and effectiveness of the comedy would be considerably enhanced if one could believe that a *Bacchae* had been produced at Rome, and not long before. There is no proof that the Roman audience had seen a version of Euripides' play, but the odds are favorable that they had. Accius, the leading tragedian in the century after Plautus, wrote a *Bacchae*, apparently in close imitation of Euripides.[49] Pacuvius had treated the story in his *Pentheus*, which he probably based, as was his custom, on a follower of Euripides.[50] Did Pacuvius' version not differ in an essential detail, substitution of a human attendant for the god, it would be tempting to assume the priority of his play and its reflection in the *Amphitruo*. It is something less than a rash conjecture, however, to assume that in the quarter- or half-century preceding the *Amphitruo* a *Bacchae* had been written, very likely by the admirer of Euripides, Ennius: first, there was a tendency for different

[47] Fraenkel (above, note 44) 351, note 1.
[48] *Ibid.* 352.
[49] Schmid (above, note 10) 682.
[50] Leo, *Gesch. d. röm. Lit.* (above, note 2) 228, esp. note 1.

playwrights to translate the same Greek originals, as a glance at Ribbeck's *index fabularum* will show; further, out of a comparatively small number of known titles seven are common to Ennius and Accius; and finally, the *Bacchae* was the most celebrated Greek tragedy at this period.[51]

Search for the original of the *Amphitruo* in Greek comedy has been frustrated by the unlimited field of choice. Beginning with Epicharmus himself every age of Greek comedy, and Italian popular comedy as well, made use of mythological themes. Parody of tragedy was nearly as old as tragedy—a feature of Old, Middle and New Comedy (though more limited in the New)[52] as well as of the Greek stage of south Italy. In the face of an insoluble problem various scholars have argued with force, even with assurance, for each of the possible sources. A conservative view, which has little more to say for it than that, is that no Plautine comedy has ever been shown to derive from an original outside New Comedy, and so the *Amphitruo* may be placed in the same category.[53] Though quite undemonstrable, this conclusion seems in general, and perhaps rightly, to hold the field. From time to time the *phlyax* of Magna Graecia, apparently a Doric folk drama which was given a special literary form by Rhinthon in Tarentum soon after 300 B.C., has been regarded as a source of the *Amphitruo*.[54] Following a vigorous attack by Vahlen almost a century ago this view rather lost favor, and Sonnenburg in his treatment of the *Amphitruo* dismissed the whole question of Rhinthon merely with a reference to Vahlen's article.[55] Now the relation which I have shown between the *Bacchae* and the *Amphitruo* introduces a new factor. Without insisting in the least on locating the original of Plautus' play in south Italy I should like to bring together for the first time the various kinds of evidence which give that area an equal claim with others for consideration.

[51] See the judgment of O. Ribbeck, *Die römische Tragödie* (Leipzig 1875) 569, and see above, note 25.

[52] J. Vahlen, *RhM* 16 (1861) 476 (=*Gesammelte philologische Schriften* 1 [Leipzig-Berlin 1911] 442) speaks of mythological parody as "not uncommon" in New Comedy, but it is hard to instance other than five titles of Diphilus.

[53] Vahlen (above, note 52) 472–6 (=*Ges. phil. Schr.* 1. 437–42); Sonnenburg in *RE* 14.1 (1928) 100; Duckworth (above, note 3) 24.

[54] On the *phlyaces* see E. Wüst in *RE* 20.1 (1941) 292–306; fragments in A. Olivieri, *Frammenti della commedia greca e del mimo etc.* 2[2] (Naples 1947) 8–42.

[55] Vahlen and Sonnenburg as above, note 53.

The details of Vahlen's argument are unconvincing, but the reasonableness of his general view—that so fine a work as the *Amphitruo* could not derive directly from rude popular farce—gave his article its effectiveness. By combining a meaning wrung through analogy from Porphyrio's commentary on Horace's *Ars poetica* with a far from compelling emendation in Lydus' *De magistratibus*[56] he showed that the plays of Rhinthon were essentially the same as *fabulae Atellanae*, a view which Duckworth has rightly rejected.[57] So long, however, as *phlyax* is considered close in meaning as well as in etymology to *phlyaria* and the paintings on *phlyaces*-vases are felt to be an accurate representation of the spiritual level of Rhinthon's plays, it seems reasonable to put them in a category with the *Atellanae* and to put the *Amphitruo* firmly in the Athenian tradition. More recently de Lorenzi has developed Vahlen's general view, though with a considerably more complex scaffolding of conjecture.[58]

Since the meagre fragments of Rhinthon's work are quite useless for any reconstruction, one is reduced to the ancient testimonies.[59] An epigram of Nossis, a contemporary, shows only that Rhinthon gained some prominence in his special genre:

> *Μουσάων ὀλίγη τις ἀηδονίς· ἀλλὰ φλυάκων*
> *ἐκ τραγικῶν ἴδιον κισσὸν ἐδρεψάμεθα*
>
> (*Anth. Pal.* 7.414. 2–3)

The principal sources of information are Suidas s.v. *Rhinthôn* and Stephanus Byzantius s.v. *Taras*. The first reads: *Ταραντῖνος, κωμικός, ἀρχηγὸς τῆς καλουμένης ἱλαροτραγῳδίας, ὅ ἐστι φλυακογραφία. υἱὸς δὲ ἦν κεραμέως καὶ γέγονεν ἐπὶ τοῦ πρώτου Πτολεμαίου. δράματα δὲ αὐτοῦ κωμικὰ τραγικὰ λη′.* The second: *καὶ Ῥίνθων Ταραντῖνος, φλύαξ, τὰ τραγικὰ μεταρρυθμίζων ἐς τὸ γελοῖον· φέρονται*

[56] The suggested change of *exôtikê* (*De mag.* 1.40) to *exodikê*, though formally unexceptionable, interferes with what seems to be a balance of meaning with the preceding phrase: *ταβερναρία δὲ ἡ σκηνωτὴ ἢ θεατρικὴ κωμῳδία· Ῥινθωνικὴ ἡ ἐξωτική.* And the Atellan had already been described as *ἡ τῶν λεγομένων ἐξοδιαρίων.*

[57] *Op. cit.* (above, note 3) 13. Vahlen had been followed by others in their discussion of the *fabulae Atellanae*, e.g., by Bieber (above, note 34) 307; more cautiously by F. Marx in *RE* 2.2 (1896) 1920.

[58] A. de Lorenzi, *I precedenti greci della commedia romana* (Naples 1946) 32–40.

[59] Fragments and mention of testimonies in Olivieri (above, note 54) 7–24; see further A. Körte in *RE* 1A.1 (1914) 843–4 and the excellent discussion in F. Susemihl, *Geschichte d. griechischen Literatur in d. Alexandrinerzeit* 1 (Leipzig 1891) 235–41.

δ'αὐτοῦ δράματα λη'. It is interesting first of all to note that neither here nor in Nossis' epigram are Rhinthon's plays called simply "comedies" (although he is himself called *kômikos*). φλύακες τραγικοί,[60] ἱλαροτραγῳδία (found only here) or φλυακογραφία, δράματα κωμικὰ τραγικά,[61] and τὰ τραγικὰ . . . ἐς τὸ γελοῖον are the terms. Special emphasis falls on the tragic element. One is reminded of Mercury's announcement that he is introducing a tragedy, which he calls at last a tragicomedy (51–9). More interesting is the verb *metarrhythmizôn*. It has been observed that this phrase means something other than just "parodying tragedy," but it has been interpreted as "making use for parody of the materials of tragedy" or "writing mythological travesty." Vahlen pointed out correctly that such a definition, which would apply as well to Epicharmus or to any number of later authors, can hardly be a description of a special genre of which Rhinthon was *archêgos*.[62] He did not, however, return to an exact elucidation of the phrase. As so often happens, a later compiler is here making use of technical expressions developed by professional scholars carrying on the Peripatetic (and Stoic) tradition in late Hellenistic and Roman times. *Rhythmos*, it has been observed, meant originally something like "form" or "shape";[63] that meaning has been better preserved in the derivative verbs, especially as used in such technical writers as Aristotle and Theophrastus, and in parts of Plato. The verb *metarrhythmizein* means then simply "transform," as Xerxes is said by Aeschylus to have "transformed" (*metarrhythmize Pers.* 747) the Hellespont (into a land route) by his bridge of boats. Now *ta tragika* could mean nothing in Greek but "tragedies."[64] So the whole phrase is: "transforming tragedies into

[60] On Nossis see P. Maas in *RE* 17.1 (1936) 1053–4. Though their interpretation would further confirm my argument, surely Olivieri (above, note 54) 7 and E. Bignone, *Storia della letteratura latina* 1[2] (Florence 1946) 261 are wrong in translating both *phlyakôn* and *tragikôn* in Nossis as nouns: "trasformando tragedie in commedie fliaciche" (Olivieri), "in lazzi tragedie trasmutando" (Bignone).

[61] It is an obvious temptation to make a single compound adjective, as does Olivieri (above, note 54) 8; that appears to be the sense.

[62] *Op. cit.* (above, note 52) 472–3.

[63] Most recently by E. A. Leemans, *AntCl* 17 (1948) 403–12, where the use of *rhythmizein* in Aristotle and Theophrastus (esp. *De lapid.* 44) could have been cited effectively.

[64] "Tragic themes" or "tragic materials" would need another noun, either expressed or implied from the preceding context; neuter of the article plus adjective is a common periphrasis for the noun; cf. *ta tragika* in Plato, *Phaedrus* 269A; see R. Kühner-B. Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik d. griechischen Sprache, Satzlehre* 1[3] (Hannover-Leipzig

something humorous." It corresponds exactly to Mercury's plans for his tragedy: *Deus sum, commutauero. eandem hanc, si uoltis, faciam ex tragoedia comoedia ut sit omnibus isdem uorsibus* (53–5). If, as has always been assumed, the *phlyaces* entitled *Iphigenia in Aulide*, *Telephus*, *Medea*, etc. are nothing more than reworkings of the Euripidean originals of the same names, then it is hard to see how they could be anything but "parodies." But the relation of the *Amphitruo* to the *Bacchae* gives a concrete meaning to τὰ τραγικὰ μεταρρυθμίζων ἐς τὸ γελοῖον which it has not had before and which may explain its curious terminology. Even the slight remains of the *phlyaces* give some corroboration of this view: the two lines preserved of Sciras are based on Euripides' *Hippolytus* 75–6, but are from a play called *Meleager*;[65] and we can see in the two lines from Rhinthon's *Orestas*

> *A.* ὁ δὲ Διόνυσος αὐτὸς ἐξώλη θείη.
> *B.* Ἱππώνακτος τὸ μέτρον. *A.* οὐδέν μοι μέλει.
>
> fr. 10 (Olivieri)

the same humorous method of "breaking the illusion" which Plautus uses in the Bromia-scene. Perhaps a variant type is that seen on the *phlyax*-vase representing Aias grasping the palladion in terror while seeking protection from Cassandra, a comic reversal of the well known story.[66] If Rhinthon used tragedies for humor in some such way as we find Plautus using the *Bacchae*, then it was accurate to call him *archêgos* of a genre, giving an original turn to what were before mere parodies of tragedies or of tragic materials. *Hilarotragôidia* looks like a technical word invented to describe a literary form not covered accurately by an older term like *parôidia*. When Vahlen wrote that Plautus' term, *tragicomoedia*, might have been derived as easily from an Attic comic title (*Kômôidotragôidia* of Alcaeus and of Anaxandrides) as from *hilarotragôidia*, he did not really observe the context.[67] In their

1898) 268δ and Anm. 3; it might possibly mean "lines of tragedy," as the singular is used for "tragic sentence" (see Stephanus-Dindorf, *Lexicon* 7 (1854) p. 2337 *med.* [Eustathius], and cf. *para ta* . . . in citation of passages by scholiasts (e.g., schol. in Aristoph. *Ach.* 446 and *passim*)); grammarians came from habit to use periphrasis with the article abnormally, e.g. *οἱ περί τινα* for a single person (Kühner-Gerth 270 *fin.*).

[65] Olivieri (above, note 54) 24–5.

[66] Bieber (above, note 34) 268 and figs. 366–7.

[67] *Op. cit.* (above, note 52) 475.

prologues Plautus and Terence discuss often, as here, technical problems of the theater, and it is to that kind of context that the terms they use should properly be related, that is, to the passage in Suidas, not to a comic title.

Having so little direct information from testimonies and fragments, literary historians have made great use of the so-called *phlyaces*-vases found in considerable number in southern Italy, especially around Paestum.[68] Paintings on them show scenes from comedies, often involving gods and heroes, sometimes everyday life. The actors wear the padded costumes, phalli and grotesque masks known from Old Comedy and seem to be a fair representation of the continuing Doric folk entertainment of which a branch developed into an art at the hands of Epicharmus toward 500 B.C. It was thought in late antiquity and until recently in modern times that *phlyax*, the name of the actor as well as of the play, meant little more than *phlyaria* or the one who spoke it. Körte demonstrated, convincingly I think, that *phlyax* was the name of a companion or attendant of Dionysus.[69] The plays took their name then because they had to do with a divine *propolos*, not because they were full of "foolishness." Thus one prejudicial element was removed. Another might disappear upon closer examination of the evidence of the vases. If the figures look rude, one must remember that they differ little in make-up from those who sang the sometimes exalted choruses of Aristophanes and are found in much the same situations as might be seen in Attic comedy.[70] More importantly, they can hardly be a reflection of Rhinthon's work. Suidas put him at the time of the first Ptolemy (ca. 305–285 B.C.), but few historians of art have dated any of the *phlyaces*-vases later than 300 B.C.; many have put them much earlier. The great majority of the vases, as Wüst summarized it, are much earlier than Rhinthon.[71] Despite the chronological difficulty they continue to be cited as exact evidence for the plot of Rhinthonic comedies. The most promi-

[68] Summary by Wüst (above, note 54).

[69] A. Körte, *Jahrb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.* 8 (1893) 89–93; confirmation and important supplement by L. Radermacher, *SBWien* 202 (1924–5) 1. Abh. 3–10. It is still quite possible to connect *phlyaria* and its relatives (not attested before 5th century B.C.) etymologically with *phlyax*, since the comedies were in early times certainly rude farces; but that meaning is then secondary.

[70] Illustrations of Old Comedy in Bieber (above, note 34) 273.

[71] *Op. cit.* (above, note 54) 304.

nent example, one especially apt in this discussion, will illustrate the kind of circular reasoning which has been used. A scene on a *phlyaces*-vase shows Zeus and Hermes outside a house at night.[72] Zeus holds a ladder as if to climb toward a window from which a woman looks at him. Hermes lights his way. The presence of Zeus, Hermes and a woman suggests Plautus' *Amphitruo* because it happens to be the only play preserved in which these two gods appear. So Winckelmann identified the scene as from the Zeus-Alcmene story.[73] Now Rhinthon is known to have written an *Amphitryon* (Athenaeus 3.111c). Therefore, Winckelmann's successors have argued, the scene is from that play. But because it fits in no respect the situation as it is known from Plautus' comedy we are told that Rhinthon's *Amphitryon* must have differed from Plautus' version, which therefore cannot have been derived from it. Even those who are cautious enough to say that it could refer to another of Zeus's many amours still retail the groundless suggestion regarding the *Amphitryon*.[74] The solution is simple. Euripides was not the only tragedian to write a *Danaë*. It was a drama popular enough to be among the first translated into Latin, by both Livius and Naevius. In the story Zeus came to Danaë, who had been confined in a specially constructed chamber of the palace, as a shower of gold through a crack in the roof. In Horace's version, the account best known in Latin, her room was in a tower.[75] The slight remains of Euripides' play give little information about its contents and no indication whether Hermes or any other god had a part. That he was a natural companion or agent for Zeus in his relations

[72] Reproduced in Bieber (above, note 34) 273, fig. 368; larger and clearer print in R. Zahn, *Die Antike* 7 (1931) 83, abb. 7; dated before 330 B.C. in the careful study of A. D. Trendall, *Paestan Pottery* (Brit. Sch. Rome 1936) 45.

[73] J. J. Winckelmann, *Monumenti antichi inediti* 2 (Rome 1767) no. 190 (described pp. 254–5) and *Gesch. d. Kunst d. Altertums* 3.4.34, without reference to Rhinthon.

[74] E.g., Radermacher (above, note 69) 20, note 1, Zahn (above, note 72) 84, Trendall (above, note 72) 39, Shero (above, note 5) 202; less cautiously Olivieri (above, note 54) 9–10. Bieber (above note 34) 269, 310; but not H. Heydemann, *Jahrb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.* 1 (1886) 276–7, nor Wüst (above, note 54) 293. Homer and Hesiod give no details of the seduction; in one version in Pindar (*Isth.* 7.5–6) Zeus as a shower of gold begot Heracles, but in later writers there is only one version of the story; see Wernicke in *RE* 1.2 (1894) 1572.3.

[75] *Turris aenea* (*Carm.* 3.16.1). In the numerous references the prison is variously placed, sometimes indefinitely, by Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 3 F 10) and Apollodorus (2.4.1) underground, but not necessarily by Sophocles (see Jebb on *tymbêrês ad Ant.* 255); see Escher in *RE* 4.2 (1901) 2084–5.

with mortal women is shown, however, by his part in Euripides' *Antiope* and in the *Amphitruo*. Ribbeck took it for granted that he appeared in Naevius' *Danaë*.[76] Surely then the scene on the vase can be nothing other than Zeus in a comic version of the Danaë story preparing to climb to the "crack in the roof." Two references in comedy, one in Menander, the other in Terence, to Zeus's entrance from the roof show that the incident was well known to comic writers and a subject for humor.[77] Although they may give some notion of the kind of dramatic material Rhinthon had at hand, the *phlyaces*-vases cannot, then, be used to define his plots, least of all that of his *Amphitryon*: first, they may all have been painted before he wrote, and secondly, there is no known representation of the Amphitryon story.

There is, however, one kind of useful evidence which the *phlyaces*-vases offer. They show something of the costuming, stage settings and theatrical construction for the *phlyaces* of their period. Since these are things which normally change rather slowly, the vases probably represent the stage somewhat as it appeared in south Italy during the third century B.C.[78] Using the painting of Zeus and Hermes along with other painted scenes and a terracotta model of a stage, Bieber, following Bethe, has recognized a special kind of stage in south Italy which had an upper level to which actors could climb and overlook the scene below.[79] Noting the reference in the *Amphitruo* to the upper storey (*in superiore qui habito cenaculo* 863) and the need for a roof in the staging, she thought it derivative at least in this respect

[76] On Euripides' *Antiope* and *Danaë* see Schmid (above, note 10) 559–63, 595–7; on Naevius' version, Ribbeck (above, note 51) 53–5. Perhaps the most damaging argument against the identification of the vase-painting with the Alcmene story is the absence of any identifying attribute, such as the cup which Zeus presents to her and which is such as important feature of accounts as early as Pherecydes, perhaps even antedating the disguise of Zeus (Jacoby on *FGrHist* 3 F 13a). The climb toward the roof, on the other hand, would be enough to identify the Danaë story.

[77] Menander, *Samia* 244–8; Terence, *Eunuchus* 584–9. Representations of the scene in ancient art are reviewed by A. B. Cook, *Zeus* 3.1 (Cambridge 1940) 455–71. Even in serious paintings Zeus was shown in human form (illogically) with Danaë: Cook, figs. 299 (p. 463) and 301 (p. 465).

[78] Though even here some caution is necessary, especially regarding the intention of the painter exactly to reproduce the theatrical performance; e.g., the expressions on the masks seem drawn often for a single scene and unsuitable for use during the entire play; see Wüst (above, note 54) 302–3.

[79] *Op. cit.* (above, note 34) 261. Good reproduction and discussion of the Sant-angelo terracotta in Trendall (above, note 72) 32 and fig. 12.

from the drama of Magna Graecia.[80] She did not emphasize sufficiently that the *Amphitruo* is unique in its stage requirements.[81] In no other of the 26 fairly completely preserved Latin comedies (nor in Menander's extant plays) is there a split of the action onto two levels, as there is when Mercury climbs to the "roof" and from there drives Amphitruo from the door (1007 ff.). Occasional use of two levels by Euripides perhaps marked the beginning of such stage construction in Athens, and it has been suspected for Middle Comedy,[82] but actual knowledge of how such a scene might work would most easily have come to Plautus through some contact with the theater of southern Italy. Little is known of his life, but some time before he began writing comedies, Plautus, an Umbrian from Sarsina, not only learned Greek and the literature of Greek comedy but also familiarized himself with techniques of the theater. He started his career as a playwright rather late in life, and one tradition tells of his travels away from Rome. So it has been thought, I believe with reason, that he may have spent some time working in dramatic productions

[80] Bieber (above, note 34) 225, 269, 327. The paintings suggest to me a more general theory about the *phlyaces*. Division of the action onto two levels can often be seen even where the informal staging did not have the advantage of a two-level building (Bieber, figs. 354, 355, 362, 369; and add perhaps 368, 387); in one scene Apollo has climbed onto a small construction which is made to represent the roof of a temple (Bieber, fig. 355; interpretation in Heydemann [above, note 74] 301). Scenes with movement from one level to another would then be characteristic of *phlyaces*, and conventional representation of a roof or other height a necessary feature when they were played elsewhere than on a stage with an upper storey, and the upper storey itself, of course, would stand for a roof or whatever the play demanded. So the window toward which Zeus climbs in the painting discussed above would be called the "roof" for the spectators. I suspect the same convention in the *Amphitruo*, where Mercury speaks probably from a window rather than from the actual roof of a building, making the convention clear to the audience by saying twice that he is going up and to the roof (*sursum* 1000, *susum . . . in tectum* 1008). The technique of explanation is, of course, frequent in Elizabethan drama, a *locus classicus* being the parody in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 5.1; see W. Creizenach, *The English Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (London 1916) 355–7. Trendall (above, note 72) 26–7 distinguishes three types of stages in the *phlyaces*-paintings, but his distinctions seem to me those of formality and permanence.

[81] As Schwering did (above, note 46) 34–5: . . . sed etiam apparatu singulari et Romanis tum sine dubio in comoedia non spectato et inusitato . . . nam et aedes Amphitruonis tam artificiose sunt exstructae ut Mercurio in tectum liceat ascendere . . .

[82] Bieber (above, note 34) 148, 224 (a much disputed question).

in the home of Graeco-Italian drama, south Italy.[83] However they reached him, elements of that drama are prominent in his plays, among them the stage construction of the *Amphitruo*.[84]

Inevitably a review of evidence appears to be an invitation to conviction. So I should say once again that the object of this discussion has not been to locate exactly an original of Plautus' *Amphitruo*, but rather to show that some features of it point quite clearly to Rhinthon and his milieu. Palmer did not lose himself in minute analysis, and his intuitions, based on a broad appraisal, are sometimes truer than the opinions of those who did. Part of the explanation of the *Amphitruo* may well be that it is, as he said, "an exalted *Rhinthonica*."[85] Other features—and even some of the same ones—point with equal force to Middle or to New Comedy. Nor do I wish to support a theory of *contaminatio* in the usual sense. Anyone who has read through most of the critical comment of the last hundred years on a single play of Plautus comes inevitably to feel that search for inconsistencies and flaws and inept transitions turns up nothing more than minutiae which are either explained easily by the next investigator or not sufficiently consistent to support any clear conclusion. It takes really no close analysis to show—one can see at a glance—that the *Amphitruo* is an amalgamation of two separate incidents in the Amphitryon-Alcmene myth. It is therefore possible to find points of inconsistency arising from the combination. But someone wrote a generally consistent and effective play, not a patchwork, when he created what we know as the *Amphitruo*, a play which contains inseparably blended the three basic ingredients which Duckworth attributed to Plautine comedy[86] and which is most easily and efficiently explained as the work of the first-rate comic playwright, Plautus.

Whatever the relation of these wider questions to each other and to their background, discovery of the relation of the *Amphitruo* to the *Bacchae* adds yet another page to the impressive history of

[83] The reconstruction of Buck (above, note 34) 18–20, though incapable of proof, seems to me eminently reasonable.

[84] See especially the discussion by A. M. G. Little, *HSCP* 49 (1938) 205–28.

[85] Palmer (above, note 6) xv.

[86] *Op. cit.* (above, note 3) 394.

the influence of Euripides' masterpiece and helps to explain the unparalleled success of the *Amphitruo* as an effective dramatic work in succeeding ages.[87]

[87] For first pointing out to me the similarity of the scenes of epiphany in the *Bacchae* and *Amphitruo* I am indebted to a former student, Mr. Hugh Pillinger, who also observed that Palmer had noted the parallel. I am greatly indebted to Professor A. D. Nock for his valuable comments and criticisms and to an anonymous referee, whose careful reading occasioned many improvements.