

BOOK REVIEW

Terence Phormio: Edited with Introduction, Translation and Commentary. By ROBERT MALTBY. Aris & Phillips Classical Texts. Oxbow Books, 2012. Pp. viii +224. Hardcover, \$85.00 ISBN 978-0-85668-606-1. Paperback, \$34.00 ISBN 978-0-85668-607-8.

The publisher's comment on the back cover in part reads: "[T]he aim of the present edition is to bring out to the full Terence's skill in plot development and character portrayal which makes the *Phormio* one of his most entertaining plays." Maltby's commentary admirably achieves this goal. The text is divided into three principal sections: (1) introduction; (2) Latin text and facing translation; (3) commentary.

Maltby's introduction (1-28) covers standard background areas for Greco-Roman comedy and the corpus of Terence which includes an overview of Greek New Comedy, history of Roman Comedy and Terence's Roman predecessors, personal and literary biography of Terence, Roman context of Terentine plays, Terentine prologues, contemporary theatrical practices, background to the *Phormio*, meters of Roman Comedy and musical accompaniment, and manuscript tradition. This introduction is ripe with learning, provides a lucid overview to the genre of ancient comedy, and offers the reader a guiding literary and historical framework within which to understand the placement of Terence and the *Phormio*. Maltby regularly directs the reader interested in a fuller treatment of these areas to most recent scholarly publications. In short, I find Maltby's introduction an excellent overview of the genre and of Terentine Comedy.

The aim of this edition begins to be realized in Maltby's discussion of contemporary criticism of Terence as found in the unique prologues to his plays. One by one, the criticisms of Lucius Lanuvinus are interpreted and evaluated through the evidence of the *Phormio* and other plays of Terence: *contaminatio* (the blending of two Greek originals into one Roman play), *furtum* or the plagiarizing of previous Roman adaptations of a Greek original, and thirdly, Terence's composition which is "feeble in content and weak in style". From here, Maltby launches into areas where the theatricality of Terence evolves beyond his predecessors such as his creating four speaking parts (e.g. *Eunuch's* Dorias 615-

737) in a given scene and re-writing a play's conclusion in a manner more complex than the Greek original, as suggested by ancient evidence, (e.g. *Eunuch*, *Phormio*, *Adelphoe*). Maltby prepares the user of his commentary for a more free adaptation of Greek original at the hand of Terence guided by his artistic sensibilities.

My only quibble with Maltby's introduction is his explanation of meter. All the metrics found in the *Phormio* are discussed and explained rather matter-of-factly. A true understanding of comedic handling of these rhythms remains wanting. No Latin examples are used to demonstrate these meters or their endless variations. A young student is left to decipher between various shades of grey.

Maltby's text-commentary covers 154 pages of the volume. His text is printed with a select apparatus criticus and a facing translation. His non-literal translation assists the reader with the narrative. Maltby's strength lies in his elucidation of characterization and motivation of characters. Maltby persuasively shows how the language of Terence so aptly supports the characters, not only at the level of stock characters, but as characters interwoven into the fabric of this farcical plot.

The relationship of the Roman adaptations to the Greek originals has been a line of inquiry since antiquity. Accordingly, Maltby continues this pursuit from the introduction throughout the commentary. Although in most cases the Greek originals no longer exist, Donatus, Terence's 4th century commentator, had recourse to more of the originals. Maltby brings the evidence of Donatus and of recent scholars to suggest and demonstrate where the Roman poet was less of a mere translator and more of an artist whose Roman sensibilities are revealed through his creative manipulation of the inherited theatrical text.

The format of the commentary is awkward. Each entry/comment is prefaced by a line number, but the entries vary between Latin and the accompanying translation. When troubled by the Latin text, a user of this commentary can be frustrated by searching for a Latin word only to realize the answer is embedded in the incipit of the facing translation. Often the commentary reads more like a literary than a textual commentary. Maltby's commentary assumes a student is largely knowledgeable of the vocabulary and morphology of 2nd bc Latin. Too frequently explanations of formations, meanings, or usages not common in later Latin (e.g. *qui, illi, ut, quidni, modo*) are absent or insufficient.

An extensive 9 page bibliography is included. There are 3 helpful indices: (1) General Index; (2) Latin Words Explained in the Commentary; (3) References

to Ancient Authors. Combined with the salient advances of recent scholarship, the wealth of learning displayed within leaves Maltby's *Phormio* as an indispensable tool for students and scholars alike to understand the art of Terence's *Phormio*.¹

CLIFFORD S. BROENIMAN

Maggie L. Walker Governor's School, cbroeniman@gsgis.k12.va.us

¹ [1] I have some minor quibbles with textual punctuation: supply commas at 56 *reddit* [,] 207 *et* [,] 493 *liberam* [,] 502 *neque* [,] and 949 [,] *inepti* [,].