

THE COMEDIES
OF
TERENCE

THE COMEDIES OF
T E R E N C E

Translated into English by F. PERRY

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PREFACE

IN making this translation of Terence I have tried to imitate, as best I could, the style and language of the Elizabethan dramatists. Translation from a dead language, which is but a literary exercise, should attempt a literary form; and for this it must either follow an existing style or create a new one. Now of the forms of literary comedy already existing in English the Elizabethan seems to be much more akin to Terence than any other. To begin with, Terence wrote romantic, not realistic comedy. He did not profess to present the manners and life of his own time and country, or to make his characters speak the language of everyday conversation—to omit other arguments, they speak in verse, which certainly was not the custom of conversation in Rome. In this point he resembles the Elizabethans, but does not resemble the comic dramatists of the Restoration, nor those of the eighteenth century, nor those of our own time, all of whom have professed to depict the manners and to use the language of the society in which they lived.

A second analogy is found in this: as the Elizabethans often drew their plots from Italian plays or novels, made their characters Italian, and laid their scenes in Italy, so Terence drew his plots from Greek comedy and made his scenes and characters Athenian. Terence indeed borrowed far more from the Greek than the Elizabethans from the Italian and added far less of his own. Possibly his comedies give us a fairly accurate picture of society in Athens a generation after the death of Alexander the Great, while we can hardly suppose that the Elizabethan drama is a

faithful picture of the society of the Italian Renaissance. Still there is an analogy between the two cases.

Again, Terence wrote when the Latin language and style had not yet reached its full literary development. This was attained a little more than a hundred years later. His Latin therefore may be called old fashioned, as compared with that of the classical period. Similarly the Elizabethans wrote a hundred years or so earlier than the period called classical in English literature, and their style and language is old fashioned by comparison with the standards then established. Terence, as far as we can judge, was, in the matter of style, much in advance of other writers of his age or even of those of the next two or three generations. He attained a degree of polish which was rarely, if ever, reached again until the classical period. Thus his style is held up by Cicero and Caesar as the best model among older writers. The Elizabethan dramatists also—though in this respect they were much more variable than Terence—show frequently, in their blank verse even more than in their prose, an advance towards the classical style which is not found in the other writers of their period or for some time afterwards. Of course the Authorized Version of the Bible stands by itself: it founded a style of its own. But most Elizabethan and even Jacobean prose is cumbrous by comparison with the diction of the dramatists.

Finally I may say that in the course of my work I have been astonished, again and again, by the ease with which a literal translation from the Latin of Terence falls into the language forms of the Elizabethan drama. Generally speaking, a translator, if he wishes to keep his translation in the literary form he has adopted, is forced to paraphrase

his original freely. This is especially true of translation in verse, and is to be expected. For it is not to be hoped for that the literary forms of one language should be so close to the literary forms of another as to admit of a word for word rendering from one into the other. I think that in the rendering of Terence into Elizabethan English a partial exception may be found to this general rule. Naturally I have had to paraphrase sometimes, but I believe that any one who cares to take the trouble of comparing the versified parts of this translation with the original Latin will find that the rendering is often word for word, or very nearly so. Yet it is, I venture to think, reasonably good Elizabethan English. I speak of general effect; for in translating from a dead language into one which though not dead is archaic I have doubtless made errors in the use of the latter.

For the purposes of this translation I have followed throughout the Latin text of the edition of Terence published by the Clarendon Press (Kauer and Lindsay, 1926).

F. P.

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THE GIRL FROM ANDROS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

SIMO	}	Old gentlemen of Athens.
CHREMES		
PAMPHILUS		Son to Simo, in love with Glycerium.
CHARINUS		A young gentleman of Athens, friend to Pamphilus.
CRITO		An old gentleman of Andros.
SOSIA		A freedman, steward to Simo.
DAVOS		Slave to Simo, servant to Pamphilus.
BYRRIA		A slave, servant to Charinus.
DROMO		Slave to Simo.
GLYCERIUM		A girl of Andros, afterwards found to be daughter to Chremes.
MYSIS		Maid-servant to Glycerium.
LESBIA		A midwife.

The scene is a public place in Athens: on the one side the house of Simo, on the other that of Glycerium.

PROLOGUE

WHEN first the poet turned his thoughts to write
This he supposed^d his sole concern should claim
To have his plays find favour in your sight.
But now he understands it not the same;
Since writing prologues all his pain engages,
Not to declare his plot, but to refute
The spites of an old poet in his rages.
Pray ye, now, hark what fault they do impute.
Menander made an 'Andrian' in this guise,
And a 'Perinthian': who knows the one
Knows both: the plot's the same, but otherwise
Conceited, and with different discourse spun.
What in the second suited—'tis confessed—
We took for the first and used it at our need.
For this they rail upon us, and protest
That patching plays is scurvy work indeed.
They are so knowing here that naught they know,
Since Naevius, Plautus, Ennius, did the same:
Them they accuse in us accusing so;
Them we allege and for examples name.
Sooner to imitate their careless ease
Than of those others the uneasy care!
Now let them hush and from their ill words cease,
If their ill works henceforth they'd have us spare.
Give silence and your most attentive ear,
That you may learn what hope in us remains,
Whether, when on the stage we next appear,
To look or hiss shall best deserve your pains.

ACT I

Scene I. SIMO: SOSIA

Enter Simo and Sosia—with slaves bearing burdens

SIMO. [*To the slaves.*] Carry this gear within. Begone! Sosia,
Hither awhile. I would a word with you.

SOSIA. Count it as said: is't to attend to this?

SIMO. Nay, something else.

SOSIA. What is there, that my skill
Can manage for you, more than this?

SIMO. I need not
Your skill for this that I design at present,
But faith and silence, which I have always found
Resident in you.

SOSIA. I await your will.

SIMO. Thou knowest, since I bought thee, how from a child
Thy bondage with me hath been mild and just.
Because thou didst bear thee gently as a slave
I made thee from a slave to be my freedman,
Paying thee with the highest price I could.

SOSIA. I mind me of it.

SIMO. I would not change my act.

SOSIA. If I have done or do what pleases you,
I am glad of it, Simo; and my grateful thanks
That this proved grateful in your sight. But now
I am troubled by your speech, for this reminding
Is like reproach of kindnesses forgot.

Say in one word what you would have of me.

SIMO. I'll do so. First, I'll tell you in the matter,
This you believe a marriage is no true one.

SOSIA. Wherefore pretend it then?

SIMO. You shall hear all

From the beginning, and in that manner learn
My son's life, my design, and what herein
I'd have you do.

My son, when first he ceased to be a boy,
And got the power of living at his will—
For while his youth, his masters, and his fears
Put bridle on him, how was it possible
To know him or discern his temper?—

SOSIA. True!

SIMO. What most or all practise in youth, to yoke
Their spirit to some pursuit—say, to breed horses
Or hunting dogs, or haunt philosophers—
None of these things he specially pursued
Beyond the rest, yet all pursued in measure.
I was glad of it.

SOSIA. Rightly, for that methinks
Is life's most useful rule, 'Nothing too much'.

SIMO. So lived he, suffering all men easily,
Yielding himself to those that he frequented
As he was with 'em, to their pursuits compliant,
To none contrary, never himself preferring
To them: so you may find most readily
A praise untouched by envy and like friends.

SOSIA. His life was wisely ordered; for to-day
Compliance friends begets, truth, enemies.

SIMO. Meanwhile, some three years since, a certain woman
From Andros voyaged to this neighbourhood,
Compelled by want and by her kin's neglect,
Of passing beauty, in the bloom of years.

SOSIA. Alack, I fear that evil comes from Andros!

SIMO. At first she led her life in chastity,
Hardly and sparing, sought her livelihood
Spinning and weaving wool. But after, when
A lover coasts her, offering rich reward,
First one and then another, as the temper
Of all that live to^d apt to slide from toil
To pleasure, she made her bargain and thenceforth
Plies i' the trade. They who then chanced to love her
Drew my son to her house, as such things go,
To have his company. I to myself forthwith,
'For sure he's caught. He has it'. Every morning
I waited for their slaves that came or went.
'What, boy!' thus I would question, 'tell me, prithee,
Who yesterday had Chrysis?'—for the Andrian
Was so named—

SOSIA.

I understand.

SIMO.

'Phaedrus', they'd say,
Or 'Clinia', or 'Niceratus'—for those three
Then loved her all at once. 'And Pamphilus,
What of him?' 'Him? he paid his scot and supped.'
I would rejoice. Another day the same
I'd make inquiry, learn that Pamphilus
Had nought to do there. So in sooth I thought him
Of continence a proved and perfect pattern.
For who rubs shoulders with such company,
And yet his spirit is not stirred therein,
Him you shall know able to keep the rule
Himself of his own life. As I rejoiced
At this, so all with one accord would speak
All good of him, and praise my happy fortune,
That had a son endued with such a temper.
What need of words? Impelled by this report

Chremes came to me, offering unasked
His only daughter, with a topping dowry,
For my son's wife. It pleased me. I betrothed him.

This is the day was for the wedding set.

SOSIA. And what prevents it be not truly made?

SIMO. Shalt hear. Some few days after this was done

Our neighbour Chrysis dies.

SOSIA. Oh, good event!

You glad my heart. I feared for him from Chrysis.

SIMO. My son on this resorted oft to the house

With Chrysis' lovers, helped with the funeral,

Was sad betimes, and ever and anon

Would join his tears to theirs. This pleased me then ;

I reasoned thus: 'He takes so much to heart

This woman's death, for small acquaintance sake.

What, had he loved himself? What should he do

For me his father?' All his sighs and tears

I did suppose to be the offices

Of humane temper and soft-heartedness—

To make my story short, I, for his sake,

Attend the funeral, even then suspecting

No ill.

SOSIA. Well, where 's the ill?

SIMO. I'll tell it you.

The corpse is carried out. We march. Meantime

Amongst the women there I chanced to note

One, a mere girl, whose form . . .

SOSIA. Was well, perchance.

SIMO. Yea, Sosia, and her face modest and comely,

As nothing could be more. Because she seemed

To mourn beyond the others, and surpass them

In gentleness and beauty, I approach

The waiting women, ask who she is. They say
It is Chrysis' sister. At that word my mind
Was levin-struck. Why, look you, here it is!
Hence flowed those tears! this was the pitying heart!

SOSIA. I fear where you'll come out.

SIMO. Meantime the funeral

Goes on: we follow: to the tomb we come.

The dead is placed above the fire. All weep.

And now this sister that I told you of

Drew nigh the flame unthinking, near enough

For danger. Thereon Pamphilus, all aghast,

Betrays his hidden and well-dissembled love.

To her he runs and takes her round the waist,

And cries 'Glycerium, dearest, what dost thou?

Why run on death?' Then she, that with no pains

You might know their love a custom, threw herself

Into his arms, all tears and tenderness.

SOSIA. How say you?

SIMO. I return, raging and vexed;

Yet no excuse sufficient to rebuke him.

He'd say 'What have I done? What ill-deserved,

Or how offended, father? I prevented

A girl who would throw herself upon the fire,

And saved her'. 'Tis an honest story.

SOSIA. Rightly

You deem it so, for if you him rebuke

Who saved a life, what should you do to him

Who offered harm or damage?

SIMO. Chremes next day comes at me clamouring—

An outrage! how he'd learnt that Pamphilus

Held as his wife this stranger. That so it is

I constantly deny, he still affirms.

In fine we part on this, that he'll refuse
To give his daughter.

SOSIA. Did you not then your son . . . ?

SIMO. Nay, even here was not sufficient strong
Reason for my rebuking.

SOSIA. How so? Tell me.

SIMO. 'Father,' he'd say, 'you have yourself prescribed
The end of these things. Now the day's at hand
When I must live after another's fashion.
Till then, let me be governed by my own.'

SOSIA. What ground is left then for rebuke?

SIMO. If for his love he will not take a wife,
That's the first wrong that can be fastened on him.
And this I now contrive, by a false marriage
To have a true cause for rebuking him,
If he refuse it. Then, for the rascal Davos,
That if he have some plot he may waste it now,
When his tricks are harmless: for I well believe
He'll work all ways amain with hand and foot,
More, sooth, to vex me than to serve my son.

SOSIA. Wherefore?

SIMO. You ask? 'Tis an ill rogue, in brain
And heart alike. Let me only catch him!—
But why make words—If on the other hand
It happens as I would, that Pamphilus
Refuses not, there's Chremes still remaining,
To whom I must excuse him, and hope to do it.
Now is your function well to counterfeit
This marriage, put the fear of Heaven in Davos,
And watch my son, what he does, what counsel takes
With yon slave.

SOSIA. Enough! I'll see to it.

SIMO.

And now

Lets go i' the house. Go you before, I'll follow.

[*Exit Sosia.*]*Scene II.* SIMO : DAVOS

SIMO. It is very certain that my son will not take a wife. I felt that Davos was afraid of this, when he heard that a marriage was on foot. But here he comes out o' doors.

Enter Davos from the house

DAVOS. I wonder if it should go off thus. I was ever afeared what should be the issue of my master's mildness. After he heard that the girl should not be given to his son to wife he uttered never a word to any of us, but took it uncomplainingly.

SIMO. [*Aside.*] But he shall utter one now, and to your great discomfort methinks.

DAVOS. This was his intention, that thus by false gladness we should be drawn unaware: then being in hope and our fears removed to catch us with our mouths open and overthrow us, before we had time to take thought for the marring of the marriage—Cunningly done!

SIMO. [*Aside.*] What says the gallows?

DAVOS. [*Seeing Simo.*] It is my master, and I saw him not first!

SIMO. Davos!

DAVOS. Oh! what 's that?

SIMO. Hither, a moment.

DAVOS. [*Aside.*] What would he?

SIMO. What say you?

DAVOS. Concerning what?

SIMO. Ask you? There is a tale i' the town that my son is in love.