

DAVID CHRISTENSON, *Plautus: Pseudolus*, Cambridge Greek and Latin classics, Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020, 414 pp., \$32.99 (pb), ISBN 978-0-521-14971-6.

I felt a certain nostalgia when reading Christenson's edition of *Pseudolus*. The first Plautine comedy I read as a student was *Amphitruo*, and the edition I used was Christenson's (*Plautus: Amphitruo*, Cambridge 2000). I learned a great deal from it and I enjoyed it tremendously. Twenty years have passed since then. I know a bit more about Plautus than I did back then, but I still enjoyed Christenson's edition of *Pseudolus* just as much as I did his *Amphitruo*.

The book falls into three main parts: an introduction, the actual edition, and a commentary. A useful bibliography and indexes complement the work.

1. THE INTRODUCTION (pp. 1-66)

I very much liked the introduction. It discusses what any introduction to Plautus ought to discuss: his life; Greek comedy and its Roman adaptations; the plot of *Pseudolus*; language; metre; textual transmission; and the reception of the play. However, at times I felt that Christenson was trying to serve two masters, the novice to Roman comedy and the seasoned scholar, and that this did not always play out well. For example, even the most elementary Latin or Greek is explained, but at the same time words like 'sociopetal' come up. And while Gratwick's coinage *Plautinopolis* is an apt way to describe the idiosyncratic half-Greek, half-Roman world represented on stage, this expression has become so widespread in recent scholarship that one gets the impression that it has to be there as a nod to the small circle of full-time scholars of Roman comedy.

A few further, minor points of criticism are in order before we move on to the Latin text; these points are not meant to detract from the overall clarity and high quality of the introduction. On p. 3, it would perhaps have helped the beginner to point out explicitly that the prologist of the *Casina* is not Plautus himself. On p. 13-19, while I found the discussion of *P.Freib.* 12 very useful, as it matches part of our play, I felt that six pages devoted to what we still have of *Dis exapaton*, the basis for *Bacchides*, was slightly excessive, given how little space there is for other topics. On p. 40, I wondered if it really makes sense to think of the slave Pseudolus as a member of the bilingual elite. Bilingual he clearly is, but in Plautus, Greek is mostly treated as the language of the lower classes and has servile connotations. A more positive view of Greek, as found in the Scipionic circle,

was only just beginning to emerge. On p. 56, iambic shortening is treated as if it were simply a metrical licence. While it is true that the extreme use in anapaests has something artificial to it – many words would not fit into these otherwise unwieldy metres – it is beyond doubt that this phenomenon must have at least had a basis in everyday speech, hence the classical survival of shortened forms like *modō* or *egō*. On p. 62–3, metrical laws are presented, but their *raison d'être* is not explained (with the exception of Luchs' law); understandably, as space is limited, but one wonders whether in this case they were needed at all, as they are more useful to the linguist or the textual critic than to the beginner, who does not need them in order to scan. On p. 63, the statement that Varro selected twenty-one plays as the canon is true, but slightly misleading; Varro believed more plays to be genuine, but selected those twenty-one because they were accepted by all scholars. On p. 64, Plautus editions are listed (and I am grateful for the positive evaluation of my own!). But perhaps we could have got a few more sentences about the comparative merits of the two major critical editions, the one by Leo, whose emendations are often brilliant, but who also excises far too much text as non-Plautine, and the one by Lindsay, who is much more tolerant of manuscript readings, but perhaps a little *laissez-faire*. On p. 64, when orthography is discussed, it would have been worth pointing out that ultimately, orthography in most editions is the editor's choice, based on criteria such as ease for students (who are mostly familiar with the partly classical and partly post-classical spellings that have become standard in editions of classical texts); faithfulness to manuscripts; and what we actually know about the spelling conventions of the Plautine period. Thus, 'idiosyncratic older forms' like *sei* were actually normal spellings at the time; *uoster* for classical *uester* is a genuinely older form, while *uorto* for classical *uerto* is hypercorrect or based on analogy to the perfect forms *uorti* and *uorsus*, where this vocalism is expected; and any superlative was normally spelled *-umus* well into the first century BC.

2. THE EDITION (pp. 67–109)

Christenson is not the first scholar to edit *Pseudolus* for an audience of English-speaking undergraduate students. Before him, the work was edited by M. Willcock (*Plautus: Pseudolus*, London 1987), whose edition I consulted very regularly when creating my Loeb edition (Cambridge MA and London 2012). If we ignore orthography, my text differs from Willcock's in 88 places, that is, roughly once every fifteen lines. Christenson and I differ much less, in only 33 places, that is, once every forty lines; and the real figure is lower, as some differences are apparent rather than real. Thus, in l. 1296 I have *sis*, while Christenson has *sic*, but this is probably a typo, given that Christenson prints *sis* in the commentary. Similarly, in l. 844, Christenson's text is unmetrical, but I assume he accidentally forgot to print *quia*. And in l. 240, I print *med* to avoid hiatus, while Christenson has *me*; but as there is

no shortening in hiatus, I take it that Christenson follows the convention of the Urbino editions here, which print *me* if this is in the manuscripts, but often point out in the apparatus that *med* was what Plautus must have had. The same applies to l. 486, with *ted* / *te*. And finally, in l. 1115, Christenson prints *assiet*, while I have *assit*; the line is a *colon Reizianum* followed by a double iamb, and it runs more smoothly with the more modern form, but of course one should hesitate to emend an older *assiet* – except that this may simply be an older spelling preserved in manuscripts when in pronunciation *assit* was intended.

Christenson does not have a critical apparatus, but a small number of textual problems are discussed in the commentary, and it is obvious that he has thought long and hard about the text, which is reliable and thorough. I will now go through the discrepancies between our editions one by one, as my edition is probably the one that is most easily accessible to scholars.

In some places, Christenson, often following Leo's school of thought, deletes lines which are kept by me; he does so because they are repetitive or clearly post-Plautine. Both approaches are defensible; we can at best hope to reconstruct a version of the text that was created from a drafted script after Plautus' death, and already at this early stage there were alternative versions of passages or lines, expansions, and so on. An editor may choose to recreate a tighter version of the text, hoping to be closer to Plautus, although there can be no guarantee that our choices are correct; or an editor may choose to be more inclusive, attempting simply to recreate that slightly later version of the text, but in the process retaining material that is of value to the historian of theatre, who will care about later productions. Christenson excludes l. 1-2, 82, 218-24, and 1205-7, all of them retained by me.

Other divergences concern our different tolerance levels of hiatus. In an iambic senarius, for example, I accept hiatus at the main caesura after the fifth (or occasionally the seventh) element, and at the *locus Jacobsohnianus* after the eight; I also accept hiatus after a monosyllable (with shortening of that monosyllable), or if there is a change of speaker or a major syntactic break. I believe that other instances of hiatus can be justified, but if no such justification is forthcoming, emendation is called for. Christenson accepts transmitted hiatus where I follow older emendations in these lines: l. 19 *iuuabo aut re | aut* (thus all manuscripts; Bothe: *aut re iuuabo aut*); l. 650 *suam | huc* (thus all manuscripts; Bothe: *huc suam*); l. 1071 *ille | hodie* (Lindsay: *illic hodie*).

Elsewhere, Christenson and I adopt different emendations for unmetrical lines: in l. 168 *abite atque haec cito celerate*, Christenson scans *abite* with iambic shortening and elision of the final syllable, but accented syllables cannot undergo iambic shortening; I follow Lindsay and emend to *celera*, which means that I have to treat *abite* as a singular imperative form *abitere* / *abaetere* rather than as a plural imperative from *abire*. In l. 449,

we need one syllable less. Christenson achieves this by adopting *promptu* (with the Palatine manuscripts) rather than the unusual *propromptu* (as the palimpsest seems to indicate), while I do so by turning the plural *iras* into a singular *iram* with elision. In l. 805, Christenson deletes *et*, while I keep it; my scansion results in a breach of the law of Hermann and Lachmann, but after the main caesura, such breaches are acceptable, if rare. In l. 995, Christenson deletes *est*, resulting in *nam necesse [est] hodie Sicyoni*, while I transpose with Ritschl to *nam hodie Sicyoni necesse est*, which feels more idiomatic. In l. 1196, Christenson writes *nulli[us]*, assuming a second-declension genitive ending; whereas I prefer to keep the transmitted *nullius*, assuming a disyllabic scansion for the word. Second-declension endings are not particularly uncommon for pronouns, but the same can be said for my scansion.

Very occasionally, two word order patterns or other variants are transmitted and both are metrical and grammatical; in such cases, it is often impossible to decide objectively. In l. 223, Christenson has *hercle ego cuncta*, while I have *ego cuncta hercle*. In l. 224, Christenson writes *haec ut loquor*, while I have *quae loquor*. In l. 284, Christenson prints *nam hic id*, while I write *nam id hic*. In l. 402, Christenson has *nusquam gentiumst*, I have *nusquam est gentium*. In l. 669, Christenson has *nam ipsa mihi Opportunitas non potuit opportunius*, while I have *namque ipsa Opportunitas non potuit mi opportunius*.

There are some further issues. In l. 14 of the second plot summary, Christenson prefers to put *secophantacie* between *cruces*; I have followed Ritschl in restoring *sycophanta*, but, as Christenson rightly points out, this forces me to assume that the writer of the plot summary no longer knew how to scan the following word, *cacula*. In l. 210, Christenson believes the woman's name to be *Xystilis*, while I have *Xytilis*; both are defensible. In l. 222, we have the same text, with different punctuation and interpretation: Christenson takes *sine modo* as 'without restraint' (preposition + ablative), while I take it as 'just let it be' (imperative + adverb). In l. 335, Christenson assigns the curse to the young man, while I assigned it to the pimp; on second thoughts, I prefer Christenson's version. In l. 534, Christenson writes *unum <in> diem*, while I keep the transmitted reading, taking *in* from the next line ἀπὸ κοινού. In l. 544, I have *istac*, Christenson has *ea*. In l. 544a, Christenson keeps *quom*, while I delete it with Weise; Weise's emendation gives a smoother text, both metrically and grammatically, but Christenson can still scan the line with iambic shortening. In l. 616, Christenson opts for the transmitted *milite*, which scans if we assume that the final syllable is subject to the licence of the *locus Jacobsohnianus*; given the rarity of this phenomenon, I prefer *militi*, with an ending taken from the *i*-stems. In l. 639, Christenson assigns *quidquid est nomen tibi* to Harpax, while I give the words to Pseudolus; both interpretations are equally good. In l. 954,

Christenson prints *mercist*, which is problematic; it is a nominative *mercis* with a prodelided form of *est*, but such a nominative is a morphological oddity. Following my practice of using largely modern orthography, I write *merx est*, although Plautus probably had *mers est* with cluster simplification (classical *merx* was restored based on the oblique cases, which had retained *merc-*). In l. 1080, Christenson prints *dixit*, while I print *dicit*, in keeping with the other present tenses in the line. Both are acceptable.

3. THE COMMENTARY (pp. 111-358)

The commentary is carefully arranged and helpful especially to the novice, who may not have read any Plautus before. Many points of language are addressed that are perhaps too basic for more advanced students, but beginners will be grateful. I do wonder, though, whether some repetition and redundancy could not have been avoided. For instance, I applaud Christenson's willingness to help students to scan by pointing out every instance of iambic shortening. But if these shortenings had been marked in the text, just as hiatus has been marked, the commentary would run more smoothly. Similarly, some general issues of language which come up again and again might have been addressed more fruitfully in the introduction, where they could have been dealt with once and for all. But these are minor issues.

In a few places, Christenson's comments on language are not entirely correct. I shall comment by line rather than by page in the commentary. L. 10, *lauis*: it is indeed true that Plautus has forms of the first and the third conjugation; but the first-conjugation forms are always intransitive ('to wash (oneself)'), while the third-conjugation forms are always transitive ('to wash someone else / a body part / something'). L. 37, *servassint*: *perduint* would not scan, it would break the law of Bentley and Luchs. L. 100, *dacrumis*: not a loan from Greek, but a cognate. L. 127, *omnibus*: worth pointing out that this violates the law of Hermann and Lachmann, but such violations are tolerated at the start of a line. L. 138, *clepere*: the relationship to Greek κλέπτω is not explained clearly; the aorist ἔκλεψα was borrowed as a perfect *clepsi*, and *clepere* is back-formed from that. L. 182, *praehibeo*: described as 'uncontracted', but Christenson himself says that it scans as three syllables, so the form must be contracted to *praebeo* in pronunciation, even if the spelling remains old-fashioned. L. 210, *quoius*: *quoius* exists as an old uninflected genitive (from genitive **k^wosyo* with an added genitive **-s* when this form became opaque), and also as an adjective, when collocations like *quoius erus* were reanalysed as adjective in agreement + noun rather than as fixed genitive pronoun + noun; the innovated adjectival form is common in Plautus and then becomes old-fashioned, surviving in classical poetry, but also in the regional Latin of the Iberian peninsula, hence Spanish *cuyo / cuya*. However, *pace* Christenson, in this passage we must be dealing with the fixed genitive

that is the norm in classical prose, rather than with the adjective, as there is no agreement with *amatores*. The adjective occurs in our play in l. 702, but here Christenson does not comment on it. L. 583, *perduellis*: trisyllabic, as stated by Christenson, but this is not synizesis, because *-u-* has always been a glide (the sound change of *duellum* to *bellum* presupposes a consonant cluster *dw-* rather than a syllable *du-*; trisyllabic *duello* in Hor. *carm.* 3.5.38 is a spelling pronunciation that became normal after the change of *du-* to *b-*). L. 596, *rationem capere*: also in Ter. *Haut.* 959, thus not unidiomatic, as Christenson claims, or intended to characterize the speaker as foreign. L. 1010, *es*: the second person of the verb ‘to be’ does not have a long vowel; the syllable is heavy because of an innovated geminate consonant (*ess*; compare Greek εἶ, from **essi* simplified to **esi* prehistorically, with subsequent loss of intervocalic **-s-*, and Homeric ἐσσί, a new formation built by analogy to third person ἐστί). L. 1258, *deis*: the form is monosyllabic, as Christenson says, but not by synizesis. Both *deus* ‘god’ and *diuus* ‘divine’ go back to *deiuos* (found thus in the Duenos inscription); forms like *deiuos* yielded *deus* by regular sound change, while nominative plural **deiuoi* turned into *diui*, and from this starting-point two paradigms were built, with a secondary differentiation into noun and adjective. The pre-classical dative/ablative plural is always monosyllabic *dis*, while disyllabic *deis* is a later formation based on nominative *deus*. If the spelling *deis* in our line is genuine, it is no more than a means of indicating a long vowel (incidentally, Varro *ling.* 8.70 is explicit about *dei*, with this spelling, being monosyllabic).

4. THE FINAL VERDICT

Christenson’s commentary is a real achievement, and probably the best commentary on *Pseudolus* that we have. As is natural for a review, I have focused on the weaker points, but for a work of this length, these weaker points are few and far between. I recommend this commentary very highly.

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