

K. MACLENNAN – W. STOCKERT, *Plautus: Aulularia. Edited with an introduction, translation and commentary*, Aris and Phillips classical texts. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016, viii+256 pp., £ 19.99 (pb), ISBN 978-1-910572-38-2.

MacLennan and Stockert have published a much-needed English commentary on one of Plautus' most influential plays. Their work is based on Stockert's 1983 German edition of *Aulularia*, which has fallen out of print.¹ While MacLennan's and Stockert's edition and commentary by comparison—in keeping with the aims of Aris and Phillips classical texts—is necessarily reduced, especially on textual and other more technical matters, it incorporates much updated Plautine scholarship and features a pair (!) of complete translations.

MacLennan and Stockert provide a substantial introduction (pp. 1-41) that is informative and pitched appropriately for students. "Plautus in his Context" broadly outlines the beginnings of Roman drama as a wing of the city's adoption of Greek literary culture, though with little acknowledgment of the act of translation at the center of this project. While Feeney's essential study *Beyond Greek*² appeared too late for MacLennan and Stockert to use, McElduff's similarly orientated work³ is ignored and little is made of the parallel texts of Menander's *Dis Exapaton* and Plautus' *Bacchides*. A linear summary of *Aulularia*'s plot and action, arranged by scene and mode of musical delivery, follows, along with a brief account of the lost ending. An overview of the play's characters appropriately focuses on the monomaniacal Euclio. MacLennan and Stockert emphasize that Plautus' central character is not a miser by nature (he is more *parcus* than *avarus*), but currently suffers from a loss of self-control; here they embrace "scholars like Wilamowitz and Leo [who] followed the opinion of Klingelhöffer [and] saw Euclio not as a miser, but as a generally respected man, who becomes ridiculous only because of his anxiety about losing his treasure" (p. 16). It is unclear what all is at stake in insisting on this distinction or what insights into Plautus' Roman comedy are gained (cf. 9n.); by comparison, Konstan's frequently cited analysis of

¹ W. Stockert, *T. Maccius Plautus. Aulularia*, Stuttgart 1983.

² D. Feeney, *Beyond Greek: the beginnings of Latin literature*, Cambridge, MA 2016.

³ S. McElduff, *Roman theories of translation: surpassing the source*, New York and London 2013.

Euclio's social alienation⁴ and Moore's astute account⁵ of Euclio's failure to secure rapport with spectators receive only passing mention.

A brief section entitled "Stage Business" (pp. 20-3) ably sketches how *Aulularia*'s stage might have been arranged in Plautus' temporary theater and how actors possibly distributed roles. Here and in the commentary, however, engagement with the full dimensions of Plautine performance is often lacking. The editors consider character exits and asides, and make productive use Marshall's indispensable account of Plautine stagecraft,⁶ but too often ignore probable onstage interactions and movements of actors suggested by Plautus' text, as well as the actors' use of theatrical space generally and their interactions with spectators (especially pronounced in Euclio's case). Notably absent is the pioneering work of Slater⁷ on such marked conventions of Plautine comedy as monologues and monodies, eavesdropping, improvisation, and Plautus' various metatheatrical moves.

The editors' account of *Aulularia*'s extensive reception focuses on European drama (pp. 24-32), and furnishes a sound overview of works ranging from the fifth-century *Querolus* to humanist-inspired productions of the Italian Renaissance, down to productions of the twentieth century, including a little known 1956 Brazilian version of Plautus' comedy. Molière's *L'Avare* (1668) is highlighted, as also Shadwell's (1671) and Fielding's (1732) English adaptations of Molière, both entitled *The Miser*. The theme of Euclio's greed and transformation is treated systematically. Maclennan and Stockert categorize adaptations according to their final dispensation of Euclio's character, that is in terms of whether he willingly gives his gold away after suffering disaster (as presumably in Plautus' lost ending) or remains unreconciled: "The first group, without exception, fail to provide a convincing change of heart on stage. The second group may offer us a more convincing central character (Molière above all) but they do so by fundamentally distorting Plautus' Euclio ... and Menander's?" (p. 31). While this systematizing approach can provide fresh perspectives into individual adaptations, it ultimately privileges "fidelity" to classical source over contemporary approaches to reception as a dynamic, multi-directional interpretative act.⁸ Relatively expansive space in the introduction is devoted to "The Greek *Aulularia*" (pp. 32-8), strikingly so in that this source play remains unknown. Maclennan and Stockert, who like most modern scholars favor Menandrian authorship of this lost (hypothetical)

⁴ D. Konstan, *Roman comedy*, Ithaca, NY 1983, 33-46.

⁵ See esp. T. Moore, *The theater of Plautus: playing to the audience*, Austin, TX 1998, 43-7.

⁶ C.W. Marshall, *The stagecraft and performance of Roman comedy*, Cambridge 2006.

⁷ Esp. N. Slater, *Plautus in performance: the theatre of the mind*, Princeton 1985.

⁸ See, for example, L. Hardwick, "Translated classics around the millennium: vibrant hybrids or shattered icons?," in A. Lianeri and V. Zajko (eds.) *Translation and the classic: identity as change in the history of culture*, Oxford 2008, 341-66.

comedy, accept the reconstruction of Primmer⁹ with few reservations. Their introduction concludes with an excellent account of the survival and transmission of *Aulularia*'s text.

Maclennan and Stockert print a serviceable Latin text similar to that of de Melo's Loeb edition¹⁰ (as they acknowledge, p. viii), which includes a reader-friendly apparatus criticus (understandably less detailed than that of Stockert's 1983 edition). Textual cruces are only very selectively discussed in the commentary. In keeping with the series, the Latin text is accompanied by a close prose translation. For the benefit of metrical "beginners" the editors print acute accents over "principal syllables" (p. vi; cf. pp. 236-7) of measures without, however, ever fully explaining what constitutes these in Latin quantitative verse. Hiatus is briefly explained (p. 240) in a metrical appendix and helpfully signaled in the Latin text by a vertical bar. Maclennan's and Stockert's commentary (pp. 110-203) is necessarily concise, yet extremely informative. Early Latin and peculiarly Plautine morphology, syntax, and idiom are expertly handled and standard reference works judiciously employed. The editors typically provide good introductory summaries of a scene's thought, style, meter/music, structure, and rhetoricity, as that of the exchange of Eunomia and Megadorus (pp. 123-4). They do not merely identify elements of Plautus' exuberant linguistics but elaborate on the specific effects (rhetorical, characterizing, etc.) of their deployment in context, e.g. "Euclio is a peasant farmer (see 13 f.) and often uses metaphors taken from agriculture ..." (45n.); "[Euclio's] rage and anxiety are underlined by the asyndetic and paratactic sentence structure and by the rich alliterative expression *perspicue palam*" (188f.n.); they even neatly focalize the frustration of the soldier imagined by Megadorus in his rant on women's expenditures: "The soldier has a right to receive his money; in *censet* we see the reproachful look in his eye" (528n.). Maclennan and Stockert sometimes comment unnecessarily on Plautus' frequent disregard of naturalism (thus betraying a modern bias for this representational mode), as when they offer a rationale for Eunomia's and Megadorus' discussing their private business outside (p. 124) or point out that too little time has passed for offstage action to have realistically transpired (e.g. 415-446n.). An unremarkable loose-end about how wedding wine is to be supplied elicits the exclamation, "the inconsistency of the comic stage!" (356n.). Axiological assumptions about Menandrian vs. Plautine "complexity" sometimes creep into the commentary: an informative note on 382-384 that acknowledges Plautine innovation (Euclio here in effect describes his mind as "voting with its feet"!) dogmatically concludes, "A complicated parody, which must have its origin in Menander." Maclennan

⁹ A. Primmer, "Der Geizige bei Menander und Plautus", *Wiener Studien* 105, 1992, 69-127.

¹⁰ W. de Melo, *Plautus I: Amphitryon, The Comedy of Asses, The Pot of Gold, The Two Bacchises, The Captives*, Cambridge, MA 2011.

and Stockert show little interest in slavery—despite Euclio’s markedly brutal treatment of the elderly and virtuous Staphyla and the remarkable “slave’s catechism” at 587ff.—notable in that the Plautine corpus has figured so prominently in important discussions of the institution’s representation in Roman literature.¹¹ The same might be said for their cursory treatment of *Aulularia*’s rape (e.g. concerning Lyconides’ claim about the culpability of *uinum* and *amor*, 745n.), a critical plot motif whose function in New Comedy has generated enormous scholarly debate in recent decades.

The edition’s alternate translation (pp. 204–34) “aspires to offer just a hint of the metrical variety and excitement which Plautus provides” (p. vii)—and is generally very successful. Plautus’ spoken trimeters are captured in English five-stress iambs and all other measures similarly receive an English stress rendering, often aided by rhyme. Some colorful translations include that of *Bona Fortuna* as “Fairy Godmother” (100); Euclio’s bizarre opening designation of Staphyla as *circúmspectátrix cum óculis émissíciís* (41) becomes “You female periscope with X-ray eyes” (41); Euclio’s paranoid aside (regarding Megadorus), 194 *núnc petít, cum póllicétur; ínhíat aúrum ut déuorét*, is rendered, “Nów he’s grasping, whén he’s giving. Gób’s agape to gúlp the gold.” Despite the metrical constraints and challenges, the translation only rarely comes off as quaint or otherwise awkward translationese, such as the rendering of the trochaic and anapaestic octonarii at 408–10 (Congrio the Cook’s panicked account of Euclio’s behavior inside):

Néver till nów have I táken emplóyment coóking for BÁCchic
ecstátic festívtiy,
Nów they’re all múrdering mís’rable mé and my mátes with
the wíckedest wéltér of whipping; we
Áll are a búndle of bruíses and breáks and he’s máde us a stáge
for athlétic actívtiy.

But overall Maclennan and Stockert capture much of the vigorous playfulness of Plautine verse; readers may compare, for example, their two versions of Euclio’s evocative socioeconomic parable of the ox and the ass (226–35, “recitative” trochaic septenarii in Plautus):

It occurs to me, Megadorus, that you are a rich man with
powerful friends, while I am the poorest of the poor. If I offer
my daughter to you, it occurs to me that you are the ox and I
am the ass. When we’re yoked together and I can’t manage the
load as you can, there I’ll be, the donkey, lying in the mud,
while you, the ox, pay me no more attention than if I’d never

¹¹ E.g. W. Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman literary imagination*, Cambridge 2000, K. McCarthy, *Slaves, masters and the art of authority in Plautine comedy*, Princeton 2000.

been born. I'll find you treating me unfairly and my own class laughing at me. If there's a separation, I won't have a safe place to stand on either side. The donkeys will shred me with their teeth and the oxen will be at me with their horns. That's why it's dangerous to try to cross over from the asses to the oxen.

Mégadorus, think of this: you come from a rich family,
 One of the élite, while I am in the depths of poverty.
 If I let my daughter marry you, here's something must be said:
 You're an ox and I'm a donkey. Once we're working head to head,
 I won't carry weight like you, and I'll be fallen in the mud.
 Then the ox—that's you—will recollect my quite inferior blood.
 You'll be hostile, my whole class will show me their contempt and hate;
 I'll have lost all ground to stand on, should we need to separate.
 Donkeys biting, oxen goring: these are just the minor shocks
 When you take the risk and change from being ass to being ox.

Instructors and students and teachers alike should enjoy comparing and analyzing the lively alternate renderings—and perhaps formulating their own—and in them may discover fertile ground for discussion of this enduring comedy of character.

Maclennan and Stockert include a metrical appendix, admittedly “brief and incomplete” (p. 235), but no doubt appropriate for such a complex, specialist topic (i.e. given the aims of the Aris and Phillips series). Their bibliography (pp. 243-50) is select and includes more German and Italian items than is usual in the series. The edition includes three distinct indices of stylistic features, general topics, and Latin words.

The criticisms expressed above, many of them of omissions and oversights rather than indictments of judgement, should not diminish Maclennan's and Stockert's tremendous service in producing this fine edition of *Aulularia*. Complaints of this type, especially in the case of such an open-ended project as a textual commentary, are highly subjective, and I perhaps run the risk of advancing my own tralatitiousness regarding what belongs in a Plautine edition of this kind. Both students and specialists will find thoughtful and sensitive interpretations in Maclennan and Stockert for many years to come.

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