

This paper treats an aspect of Roman comedy as yet uninvestigated, namely the possibility that the playwrights misunderstood dialogue taken over from their Attic models. In Terence, it will be seen, some longstanding difficulties of the text are surprisingly easy to account for as mistranslations.

At *Ht.* 818-9 (*quid igitur dicam tibi uis? abiisti. mihi / amicam adduxi quam non licitumst tangere*) *abiisti* intrudes pointlessly; the word has often been conjectured away, never plausibly, or printed between daggers. I believe that Terence did write *abiisti*, understanding ἀπεχώρησας where Menander had written ἀπεχώρισας, 'you have sequestered her'. *Ad.* 585 (*lectulos in sole illignis pedibus faciundos dedit*) is a similar case. What does *in sole* mean there? Commentators have claimed 'couches for outdoor use', but classical Latin shows no parallel for such a function of *in*. The only interpretation consistent with usage, 'He has ordered couches with oaken feet to be built in the sunshine', involves a bizarre irrelevance. How to explain it? By supposing that the original spoke of ἔνηλοι κλίνας, couches with decorative metalwork, and that Terence understood ἐνήλιοι, 'in the sun'. *Hec.* 307-8 (*non maxumas quae maxumae sunt interdum irae iniurias / faciunt*) seems to mean the opposite ('the greatest quarrels sometimes do not cause the greatest wrongs') of what is needed ('the greatest wrongs sometimes do not cause the greatest quarrels'). The problem has been dealt with by supposing a difficult two-stage corruption or (more often) by following Donatus in understanding a special sense of *facio* ('prove', 'imply'), a sense again unparalleled. It is easier to imagine Terence confronted with an object hard to tell from the subject, for example ἂ μέγιστα φαίνεται ὄντα μίση πολλάκις / τὰ μέγιστ' ἀδικήματ' οὐ ποεῖ. At *Hec.* 320-1 (*uxorem Philumenam / pauitare nescioquid dixerunt*) attested Latin usage, again, does not allow a satisfactory understanding. Ancient scholiasts again supposed a special sense (*pauitare*=have a chill') and again are still followed. A cleaner solution would have Terence, on seeing φοῖττειν τι 'shiver somewhat', understand 'be afraid of something'. Finally, things have gone very wrong at *Hec.* 463: *quicquid est id quod reliquit, profuit* is an unsatisfactory answer to Laches' question ('How much did Phania leave us?'), and the tense of *profuit* is puzzling. All is explained by imagining for the original οὐ κατέλιπεν γ' ὠνήμεθ', ὅποσον ἄν ποτ' ἦ *vel sim.*, with an idiomatic sense of ὀνίνημι: 'we're just lucky he left us anything at all'.

If the foregoing is accepted, the following may be concluded: Terence's freedom in some matters was compatible with a doggedly literal treatment of those lines he took over directly; the pattern of error suggests that he was more familiar with the high-literary than the spoken registers of Greek, with all that implies for his education and that of others in his time. Finally, editors of Roman comedy must now reckon with a new possibility—mistranslation, to be considered wherever the cohesion of a passage is compromised while grammar and metre remain intact.