FROM THRASO TO HEROD:
HROTSVITHA MEETS THE BRAGGING SOLDIER

FROM THRASO TO HEROD:

HROTSVITHA MEETS THE BRAGGING SOLDIER

by

JOANN MACLACHLAN BEAN, B.A., M.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (1999) McMaster University
(English) Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: From Thraso to Herod: Hrotsvitha Meets the Bragging Soldier.

AUTHOR: Joann MacLachlan Bean, B.A., M.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor R. W.Vince

NUMBER OF PAGES: iv, 241

ABSTRACT

This work examines the antecedents of the Vicious Tyrants of the Mystery Cycles as they appear in earlier dramatic works.

The first chapter describes the bragging soldier of Roman comedy, defining him in his formative dramatic environment. Perception and reality are at odds in important elements of his character: he appears as a menacing and powerful rival to the young lover and as a threat to the courtesan. In reality he is never successful in carrying out his threats. The ways in which Plautus and Terence create and use the bragging soldier are explored.

The bragging soldier, his character and behaviour having been defined, is then followed into Christian drama, specifically into the spoken or acted works of Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim. Because Hrotsvitha says she is using Terence as her pattern, she provides a clear instance of what effects Christian sources and theology, whether or not they are shaped by the traditions of five hundred years of folk practise, have on the bragging soldier and his dramatic interactions.

The figure is then followed into the Mystery Cycles to see how consistent the changes observed in Hrotsvitha's works are with the behaviour of bragging soldiers in a body of work which hovers in the wings behind later English drama.

Hrotsvitha's dramatic works have not been used in this way before. While Hrotsvitha's work has been extensively studied as an artifact, as a tenth century manuscript, it has not been seen as evidence of what happened when one tradition met another.

The resulting exploration reveals the Vice Figures and Vicious Tyrants of Medieval Drama in embryo. The study, thus, contributes to an understanding of how Christian attitudes shaped the characters of Roman Drama and provided the basis for dramatic stereotypes which still exist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No work which takes more than ten years to complete is completed by one person alone. I owe a debt beyond my ability to repay to my family, who wished me well but stopped asking; to my lover, who as time passed was afraid to ask; and to a host of friends, mostly women, and too numerous to name individually within the margins of this work, who read bits and listened to bits and held me in their esteem until I finished.

I'm grateful to the staff of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the British Library in London who treated me as if I were a scholar.

I thank Professor Laurel Braswell who began this journey with me and Professor Ron Vince who saved me from drowning – twice.

INTRODUCTION

I met Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim when I was beginning my graduate work and studying Medieval Drama for the first time in many years. When I saw a woman's name in a footnote in a Medieval Drama text I was curious; so I read Hrotsvitha's plays in the English translations of both St. John and Butler before looking at them in the original Latin.[1] I was intrigued by a talent which could be so variously interpreted, sanctified, sentimentalized, denied, and rediscovered.

Seen in the context of Medieval Drama, however, Hrotsvitha's plays appear neither trivial nor misguided. The material is, as Sandro Sticca has ably demonstrated for Hrotsvitha's *Dulcitius*, unified by theological symbols and argument.[2] In the context of Saxon Germany, where Gandersheim was a bustling

---

[1] Hrotsvitha has been well served by women translators. Christopher St. John, *The Plays of Roswitha* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1923) and Marguerite Butler, *Hrotsvitha: the Theatricality of Her Plays* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1976) were the first to translate the plays into English. Helena Homeyer, ed. *Hrotsvithae Opera* (Munich: Schoningh, 1970) not only edited all of Hrotsvitha's works she also provided a thoroughly annotated translation into German. The Emmeram-Munich Codex (Codex 14485, of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich) is excellently preserved and I was grateful to be allowed to work with it during a brief visit to Munich in 1985.

[2] Sandro Sticca, "Hrotsvitha's 'Dulcitius' and Christian Symbolism," *Medieval Studies*. 32 (1970):108-127.

centre, and where the convent, a royal foundation, was visited regularly by persons of clerical and political importance, the interweaving of the religious and the secular in Hrotsvitha's plays is easily understood.

For some time I considered her plays in these contexts, meanwhile pursuing my graduate studies through deconstructive criticism and metaphysical poets, through World War I trenches and Arthurian tournaments. But I continued to be drawn into the academic argument concerning the reading as opposed to the performance of Hrotsvitha's plays; I rejected claims that Hrotsvitha, though definitely a real and talented writer had lived in an age without drama. I sided with Magnin and Butler and searched for clues to production in the texts and in the manuscript.[3]

From time to time Professor L. Braswell, my supervisor at that time, urged me to consider other aspects of Hrotsvitha scholarship, to look at Hrotsvitha's sources.[4] I began by comparing Hrotsvitha's plays to her Terentian source and

---

[3] Cornelia Coulter in "The 'Terentian' Comedies of a Tenth-Century Nun," *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 24 (1929): 528 states, "That this dialogue could be acted seems never to have occurred to Hrotsvitha; Terence's plays had long since ceased to be given on the stage..." E.H. Zeydel in "Were Hrotsvitha's dramas performed during her Lifetime?," *Speculum*, Vol. 20 #4 (Oct. 1945) outlines the history of Hrotsvitha's plays and quotes Magnin's assertions concerning the theatricality of the plays. The title of M. Butler's book *Hrotsvitha: The Theatricality of Her Plays* testifies to her opinion.

[4] J. Bean, "Terence Chastened: Two Character Types from the Plays of Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim," *Michigan Academician* 16.3 (Spring 1984): 383-390 and "Is That You.Boethius? The use of Boethius for fun and profit in the plays of Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim" (Paper presented at The Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters. Spring, 1984).

then, curious both about Terence's sources, and about the context in which his drama developed, moved on to looking for Menander and reading Plautus. Then it dawned on me that, as so often happens in such cases, my supervisor was correct. Although the question of performance was interesting, it was not the only question. In providing an accurate text, examining the provenance of the text, searching for Hrotsvitha's credentials, tracing her sources and considering her purposes, scholarship had performed necessary services; however, that scholarship done, it was time to examine this important tenth-century artifact as evidence of the ways in which certain dramatic traditions might have changed or remained unchanged in an important transitional moment.

I had to begin with Roman comedy. I could read about Greek Middle and New comedy and consider the roots of Roman comedy but, without complete texts in which the bragging soldier appeared, I could not be sure of the methods of creating character and plot or indeed of the methods of creating comedy.[5] It is clear from reading the extant Roman comedies that a slave or a parasite may speak

---

[5] See Norma Miller, *Menander: Plays and Fragments* (New York: Penguin, 1987). The two plays of Menander which are more or less complete do not include a bragging soldier. Those in which a soldier appears are far from complete. As they have been assembled thus far, the soldiers in them appear to be sometimes violent and sometimes braggarts but not so stereotypical as Plautus' and Terence's creations. At the present time, although it is clear that the Roman dramatists found the character in Greek New Comedy, it also appears that they are responsible for developing the form of soldier which marched down through the ages. In the opening chapter of *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy: A Study in Comparative Drama from Aristophanes to Shakespeare,* (University of Minneapolis Press, 1954) 3-8, Daniel Boughner discusses the prototypes of the bragging soldier as they appeared before Plautus and Terence recreated them.

as martially as a bragging soldier. Indeed, an important element of the comic lies in having one character speak as the audience expects another to speak. Therefore, I felt that I must use caution when attributing fragments or dealing with reconstructed scenes. I immersed myself in the six plays of Terence and the twenty plays of Plautus which come to us more or less complete.[6] These are the only classical texts which concern me in this work.

The world of Roman comedy is fascinating for the student of English. So much of the material – characters, situations, language, even jokes – is vaguely recognizable. I wanted to deal with each and every character, discover the patterns of relationships, compare the use of stages, follow the familiar phrases, trace the development of jokes, both verbal and physical, and consider the relationships between stage and audience, between drama and the society which produces it. So many beginnings were so well begun before Plautus and Terence. So much is recognizable which begins again in the medieval period, and in the Renaissance, and again in the twentieth century, for that matter.

I began by considering all of the elements of drama: characters, plots, language, action, stage, actors, directors and audiences but I soon narrowed my study to the one character, the bragging soldier. When first I started to consider

---

[6] The texts of Plautus and Terence as we have them come with no guarantees, but one must start somewhere. A complete assessment of scholarship concerning the classical plays is found in R.W. Vince's *Ancient and Medieval Theatre: A Historiographical Handbook*,(London Greenwood Press, 1984).

the soldier's roles as texts presented to audiences there was very little critical theory which applied clearly to drama.[7] The effect of dramatic structures on drama, as opposed to the effect of the text on drama, was being considered by scholars such as Mark Rose but, by and large, dramatic texts were being considered as words written on paper and not as a collaboration of author, director, actor and audience working on and in a space. When Rose wrote of dramatic structures and the design of such structures he referred to the order and arrangement of such things as procession and crowd scenes, soliloquy and dialogue, the length of scenes, and the choice of which characters speak to which and when. In other words he regarded the things which are seen and done on stage as being as important to the impressions an audience receives as are the things said. It was this arrangement of elements other than language only which I felt must be explored if the character of the bragging soldier were to be identified in drama from more than one period of time.

My problem was complicated by the fact that in order to show how Hrotsvitha's dramatic works were situated in the world of drama, where they might be placed on a time line which began before Plautus and ended after the cycle plays of the Middle Ages, I needed to provide a critical framework which

---

[7] My writing of this thesis has occupied more years than I care to admit but began when critical theory more modern than that developed by Northrop Frye was in its introductory stages as a respectable part of the university curriculum, and the rapidly expanding newer schools of theory dealt largely with poetry and prose. See Mark Rose, *Shakespearean Design,* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1972).

applied to works from three totally different eras, with entirely different purposes, and using very different stages and methods of production. The dramas would, of necessity, have been created by and from reactions between audiences and audience: expectations as different from each other as they were from those of the present and, thus, not easily defined by someone in the twentieth century. What I was, in part, concerned with was how that interaction influenced the writing and performance of the works. Some variety of Reader Response Criticism was best suited to describing this interaction but it required modification to accommodate a spoken and fluid text which was not read and reread by the same persons so much as read and reread by the authors, the actors, and the directors until a desired result was achieved and then read only once by, and made meaningful at once for, the audience. It was with this in mind that I looked more mechanistically at the Roman plays – counting duration of appearance, number of lines and repetitions of words and phrases, as well as less precise qualities of utterance – to build a framework upon which I might discuss the dramas from all three periods.

There are several ways of determining how a character is made to function in a work. The amount of text occupied, or number of lines spoken may be counted. The time a character spends on stage or is present in a scene may be determined. The number of times a character is mentioned or amount of text given to speaking about that character may be determined. The other characters who are on stage or present at the same time and those with whom the character under consideration

speaks, or does not speak, may be determined. These are factors which, aside from the words spoken, influence a performance and contribute to the audience's experience of a character. These factors, then, became the basic framework for my analysis of the bragging soldier in his classical form. This was the framework for my definition of the character.

Then the task becomes more subjective. Some of what a character does may be determined by what others tell the audience, but much of a character's action must be inferred from the things said or from what the reader or director already knows or supposes. Surprisingly, in a medium which is supposedly ephemeral, which relies on an audience hearing and seeing the action once, the reality is that much of what is seen and heard on stage depends on actors – or directors – observing and copying, or reading and rereading, rehearsing and replaying as they interpret written words or oral traditions in collaboration with others. A spectator may see and hear a play once; those who present it are powerfully intimate with it. Thus the nature of the matter to be acted, the attitude to that matter and that action, the reason for that dramatic action and the results of that action are used to tell something about a character and his or her relationship to other characters. These matters of matter are also subject to many interpretations in as many different times and places as there are stages and actors. Finally the words and the patterns of words are of interest in the examination of a character. These latter are

of interest both in themselves, and for hints they give to the manner of the character's speaking.

I have used most of the above criteria in my examination of the bragging soldiers of Terence and Plautus. The bragging soldier is observed first and then his relationships with the parasite, the young lover, the courtesan and the slave are examined. At the end of my first chapter I have drawn some conclusions about the nature of the bragging soldier and his acquaintance, and about the matters which concern them. All of these will help me to identify them if and when they appear in Hrotsvitha and in the medieval plays.

Chapter II is central to the conclusions drawn in this thesis, showing as it does the development of two possible types of Vice figure in their earliest dramatic manifestations. The chapter begins with an introduction to Hrotsvitha and her dramatic works. The characteristics of the bragging soldier are then traced as they appear in various characters in Hrotsvitha's dramatic works. These works are much shorter than the Roman dramas and are in part determined, perhaps circumscribed, by Hrotsvitha's sources and the conditions of performance: if the material was read aloud, as opposed to being acted on stage, the casting requirements and stage effects would not have presented the problems of live presentation. For these reasons I have not rigorously compared the numbers of entrances and ratios of lines which were determined for classical soldiers with

those for Hrotsvitha, dealing with them, instead, in a more general way. I have relied more than I might have wished on text rather than on staging. I have then compared the general conclusions I reached in Chapter I with the elements which appear as I examine the soldiers of Chapter II.

Because the matter which Hrotsvitha chose did not explicitly deal with bragging soldiers and slaves or young lovers, did not, on the surface of it, deal with the stereotypical characters who people Classical drama, it was more convenient to search each play separately for traces of the character and then draw conclusions concerning survivals and changes in the appearance of various criteria at the end of the Chapter. In the course of drawing these conclusions it becomes clear how vital the bragging soldier's characteristic traits are, which traits are central and which are accumulated or peripheral and how suited to the villain's role in medieval drama, are the traits which were largely comic in the classical context. In fact these traits allow, perhaps they require that the Romans' comic character emerge in a medieval context as an evil figure and a prototype of what I call, to distinguish him from his near relative the Vice, the Vicious Tyrant figure.

As I consider the bragging soldiers in Hrotsvitha's works I also note the emergence of a new kind of slave. I observe the emergence in Hrotsvitha's work of a faithless slave who is contrasted with the faithful if sneaky, clever slave common in Roman comedy. However, it is not in the scope of this work to provide a more exhaustive discussion of the 'running slave,' who has been ably

treated in Classical Comedy by George Duckworth and N.W. Slater.[8] It is also not necessary discuss the development of the Vice in the Morality Plays and its connection to the evil figures in later drama, especially Shakespeare, as that has been traced by Charlotte and Bernard Spivack in their separate works.

What did remain was to see whether the changes observed in the bragging soldier of Hrotsvitha were consistent with the character as he appeared later in Medieval Drama. In Chapter III, I chose to see what happened when the tyrants of Hrotsvitha's plays marched into the English Cycle plays and, given the number of plays involved, this was a daunting prospect. It seemed best to use and modify the technique of Chapter II and search similar episodes for bragging soldiers, to draw some brief conclusions at the end of each series of episodes and sum up the findings of the Chapter when all of the Cycle plays had been considered.

Because it is unlikely that many readers will be familiar with the texts from all three periods of time, I have thought it useful in many cases to provide summaries of the action and language of the plays, in addition to quoting, sometimes extensively, the lines strictly applying to the arguments being made. I realize that for those who are familiar with the plays this is a sometimes tedious addition to the text and I apologize.

---

[8] N.W. Slater, *Plautus in Performance*.(Princeton University Press, 1985) and George Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton University Press, 1952).

*

The conclusion which arises from the examination which follows is that the elements which create the bragging soldier in Roman Comedy, and the transformation of those elements when the soldier encounters Christianity, account in part for the ways in which the Vicious Tyrants of the cycle plays are portrayed. The Tyrant's wild language, abuse of props, violent domination of the stage, and acting out of the comedy of evil, at least in certain situations is more understandable. It is to the bragging soldier of classical comedy and his fellow stereotypes that I would suggest we look when we look for the antecedents and near relatives of the Vice figures, the ranting Herods and their circle of acquaintance, as they appear in Medieval Drama.[9] The suggestion that these figures have classical antecedents has been made before. However, an examination of the work of Hrotsvitha shows the transition – shows the first steps of that process at a stage where the theological reasons for the process are clear. This observation clarifies the confusion concerning the various sorts of Vice figures. It becomes clear in observing the Vice in embryo that there are descendents of the bragging soldier and descendents of the clever slave and that their emergence may

---

[9] Charlotte Spivak, *The Comedy of Evil on Shakespeare's Stage.* London, 1978. In the first chapter of her book, Spivack discusses at length the prose antecedents of the dramatic representations of "vices" and the privative nature of evil as it leads to the comedy of evil. She does not suggest any dramatic antecedents.

be predicted by the circumstances in which they find themselves and by their relationships to the other stereotypes in the drama.

*

Thus the examination of the tradition and transformation of the soldier as he becomes the Vicious Tyrant figure provides an additional conclusion, suggesting something about the relationship of three major building blocks of drama: the protagonist, the antagonist and the feminine object of their desire.

*

Ultimately I would like to agree with the oft stated suggestion that by the time drama enters the modern era familiar characters, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who have most in common with Roman bragging soldiers: cheerful egotism, guilt free appetites, military failure without consequences, lack of contact with the lady, these soldiers may have arrived by more or less direct routes from knowledge of the classics - from Renaissance revivals and schoolroom dramas. But I would like further to conclude that Vicious Tyrants of the Mystery Cycles, and their descendants, such as Richard III, who dominate the stage with rank, consequence, and malevolence, are closely related to the more seductive Vice Figures and that both antagonists of the comedy of evil appear to have evolved from recognizable

antecedents in Classical theatre as it was changed in the crucible of medieval theology and drama.[10]

---

[10] Bernard Spivak, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: the History of a Metaphor in Relation to His Major Villains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958). B. Spivack traces the roots of the behaviour of Iago and Richard III in particular. He concludes that their motivation is found not so much in the circumstances of their respective lives or plays, but in the circumstances of their dramatic antecedent, the Vice figure. Anne Righter in *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962) accepts this argument. Righter also notes that in the 16th century morality play *Thersites* the central character, Thersites is "an odd combination of the braggart warrior of Plautus, the Vice and the ranting Herod of the mystery plays" (49) and later notes that in *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes* the "valedictory remark of the Vice harks back to Roman comedy"(73) but she does not carry this investigation any further.

CHAPTER I

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

The bragging soldier is an instantly recognizable type. People who have never heard of Roman Comedy recognize the bragging soldier in his modern manifestations on T.V., or in musicals. The stereoptype is powerful and predictable. Audiences know what to expect from Sergeant Bilko or Colonel Klink. Writers create him without ever analyzing their sources, perhaps without realizing that there are precedents for the character and his behaviour.

The first thing which becomes apparent when the stereoptype is carefully observed in its classical manifestations, however, is that the braggart warrior has an influence quite out of proportion to his activities on stage. Indeed it is remarkable that a character who appears so infrequently and for such short periods of time could have gained such a large hold on imaginations through the centuries.

Plautus, in the plays which we have, sends onto the stage only six soldiers. Those in *Bacchides* and *Epidicus* each occupy the stage for less than one hundred

lines.[1] Therapontigonus of the *Curculio* and Antamoenides of *Poenulus* are each on stage for less than two hundred lines, while Stratophanes of *Truculentus* is on stage for just over two hundred lines. Even the great Pyrgopolynices is on stage for only four hundred and fifty nine lines; in his own play, *Miles Gloriosus*, he is on stage for less than one third of the lines: about as long as the old man, Periplectomenus, and less than half as long as the slave, Palaestrio. A seventh soldier, who is required for the plot of Plautus' *Pseudolus*, never appears on stage. Terence's only soldier, Thraso, is on stage for less than one quarter of *Eunuchus*. Over the remaining corpus of twenty-seven Roman comedies the braggart warrior struts but briefly; and the question of how such a large and lasting impression may be created in such circumscribed circumstances is the first which begs an answer.

*

RIVALRY

The least obvious common characteristic of the bragging soldier is the one from which all the others, the huge and obvious and the less observable but still essential characteristics, follow. He appears only as a rival. There is always a courtesan; even if she does not appear, or indeed, if the soldier himself does not appear, there is a woman whom the young lover wants and the soldier in some way has or can easily obtain. The plays in which he appears are plays in which the plot

---

[1] *Bacchides* is over 1200 lines long. *Epidicus* is shorter, only 733 lines long.

revolves about the winning of the courtesan. Always. He does not appear fighting for property, except to the extent that he regards the courtesan as property. His property – his goods and his money – is used as a tool, sometimes by him, more often by others. He does not appear fighting for glory. He assumes he has it. He does not appear fighting in any serious way. In comedy the bragging soldier appears in a competition for which he is not trained, one he does not know how to win, one where he is out of place. His lack of ability in this competition calls into question his ability in the field and he is, therefore, seen as inept in both. It is his fight for a woman, his participation in the wrong battle, which makes the play, or the part of the play in which he appears, comedy.

**

RAGE

The soldier expresses only one emotion well. It is an emotion which fills the theatre, resonates with all the other characters and with the audience and contributes to his being a focus of attention. He is angry. Psychologically and technically there are reasons for the soldier's limited emotional repertoire. Emotionally, because he participates in a battle for which he was not trained, he is always baffled and his bafflement expresses itself in anger. Technically it is because he is given so little time on stage that the gamut of the soldier's emotions is limited:

rage and fury he expresses with the competence born of repetition. He has no time to express other emotions. Stratophanes in *Truculentus* threatens:

nunc ego meos animos uiolentos meamque iram ex pectore iam promam. (603)

Now will I release my furious feeling and the rage from my breast at last.[2]

In the same way Therapontigonus' fury is exaggerated as he makes his first entrance in *Curculio*:

Non ego nunc mediocri incedo iratus iracundia... (533)

Now I march on raging with a rage not moderate...

Pyrgopolynices, given more lines than most soldiers, and having therefore more scope, remembers past fury and orders his armour prepared for future rages. He still does not deal so well with other emotions. Pyrgopolynices expresses vague surprise at some of the flattery pressed upon him and then exaggerates this admiration of himself. To avoid the soldier's anger other characters flatter him. When faced with flattery he can only agree and exaggerate the flattery. When Palaestrio, the slave, tells Pyrgopolynices that the lady who loves him is one deserving a man of his quality Pyrogopolynices grandly, if illogically, flatters himself by replying that in that case the lady must be a great beauty (968). When Stratophanes in *Truculentus* tries to express generosity it too is on a grand scale

---

[2] T. Macci Plauti, *Truculentus* in *Comoediae,* 2vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1968). All other references to Plautus will be to this edition and will be cited in the text using only the line numbers except where the play referred to is not clearly stated in the text.

but he does not have a large emotion with which to react when his gifts are not appreciated. He can only complain:

> nilne huic sat est?
> ne bonum uerbum quidem unum dixit. uiginti minis
> uenire illaec posse credo dona quae ei dono dedi. (542-544)

> Is nothing sufficient for her? Not one good word has she said. I believe those gifts, which I presented to her as a present, could be sold for twenty minae.

Such confusion of love and money, such whining is hardly on the grand scale of his more violent emotions.

***

EXAGGERATION

Exaggerated anger, exaggerated flattery: the emotions of comedy are held up to ridicule by being exaggerated. Exaggerated language is the most obvious method used to inflate the character who, according to Terence, was already a braggart in his Menandrian source.[3] The language used to describe the soldier's emotions and his actions, as well as that describing his physical characteristics, be they frightening or charming, is larger than life. The exaggeration begins with his

---

[3] P. Terenti Afri, *Eunuchus* in *Comoediae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), l. 30. All references from Terence are from this edition and will be indicated by line numbers in the text. I have translated fairly literally; the original poetry often suffers as a result, especially in passages where the sound of the words adds to their effect. As I noted in the Introduction we do not have clear evidence for Terence's assertion. He had more evidence than we, however.

name. The soldiers' names are all from the Greek and all have martial connections of one sort or another. Pyrgopolynices' name suggests a fortress of much victory or much victory over fortresses (double barrelled names are bound to be ambiguous); Antamoenides suggests defense; Cleomachus suggests glorious power; Stratophanes a shining army; Terence's Thraso is clearly confident, arrogant and rash especially verbally. Therapontigonous has the least boisterous name; being named not for a squire but for the son of a squire connects him to battle but in the most ineffective rank. His name is long but its meaning is small and, like the names of the others, draws attention to his comic nature.

In addition to using florid language to name and emphasize the soldier, the playwrights often use language which calls attention to itself. The soldier may also be made to overestimate the effects of his emotions, the imagined results of his rage. Thus Therapontigonus goes on from his entrance in *Curculio*, quoted above, to say that this is

> eapse illa qua excidionem facere condidici oppidis.(534)
>
> that very rage with which I have learned to wreak havoc on cities.

Later in the play Therapontigonus takes exception to being threatened by the pimp, Cappadox, and expresses his frustration in most martial terms:

> leno minitatur mihi, meaeque pugnae proeliares plurumae optritae iacent?...nisi mi
> uirgo redditur, iam ego te faciam ut hic formicae frustillatim differant. (572-576)

> Does the pimp menace me and do my countless fighting frays lie fallen?
> ...unless the girl is returned to me, I will at once personally make sure that ants here disperse you in pieces.

Such language is memorably threatening; but it does not completely explain the soldier's reputation, because the violence which is offered is more verbal than real.

Despite their fury and their bragging, the soldiers are not very violent. In an interesting reversal of their roles outside the theatre, the slaves describe, suffer, and deal out on stage more physical punishment than the military men. Indeed, only four of the seven warriors, Cleomachus, Antamoenides, Stratophanes and Therapontigonus even threaten violence. Cleomachus threatens death. Antamoenides prefers to speak of beating and battering. Stratophanes and Therapontigonus are partial to chopping into pieces, though Therapontigonus comes up with the intriguing idea of turning the pimp, Cappadox, into a catapult (*Curc* 689-90). None of the threats is carried out. Terence's Thraso grandly gives orders, arranging his forces in a show of strength without ever stooping to mere physical threats.

The nature of those threatened ensures that language is unlikely to become action. Three women, two pimps, one banker and one old man are threatened. One proposed attack is against a cook armed with a kitchen knife. Another rival, Strabax, is threatened as he kisses Phronesium in *Truculentus*. The lover, Mnesilochus, in *Bacchides* is threatened but he is not present at the time. With the exceptions of Strabax and Mnesilochus such victims are scarcely worthy of great

warriors. There is evidence in the texts for only one warrior actually striking his victim: Therapontigonus strikes the parasite, Curculio, but Therapontigonus is moments away from discovering that he is brother to and not rival for the courtesan. The audience already knows, if the soldier does not, that he is not an unworthy rival but a filial protector of feminine virtue. This does not mean that a director will not choose to present beatings on stage; indeed, *Miles Gloriosus* may end with a comic reversal in which the soldier is being beaten.[4]

The contrast between the violent threats and the often timid actions of the braggart warriors is emphasized by language which, as can be seen in the examples above, is often repetitive. The language leaves no one doubting that the soldier is a figure of fun. In *Bacchides*, Cleomachus, who is more mercenary than military, indulges in such repetitive language as he doubly swears double death to his rival Mnesilochus:

> nam neque Bellona me umquam neque Mars creduat,
> ni illum exanimalem faxo, si conuenero,
> niue exheredem fecero uitae suae. (847-49)
>
> Never may either Mars or Bellona believe me again, if I don't make him lifeless, if I meet him, or if I don't disinherit him of his own life!

---

[4] John Arthur Hanson, "The Glorious Military" in *Roman Drama,* ed. T.A.Dorey and Donald R. Dudley (New York: Basic Books, 1965), 51-85.

Cleomachus, in threatening to kill Mnesilochus unless he is paid for Bacchis, provides a clear example both of the shortcomings of translation and of the way that repetition of sounds complements the repetition of ideas to humourous effect:

...iam illorum ego animam amborum exsorbebo oppido.(869)

...I myself shall immediately suck the life out of both of them.

Often the manipulation of emotion and sound leaps all bounds and reaches the fanciful. Plautus' creation of enthusiastic language for Antamoenides in *Poenulus* leads to a syntactic confusion of fantastic proportion:

Ita ut occepi dicere, lenulle, dé illac pugna Pentetronica,
quom sexaginta milia hominum uno die uolaticorum manibus occidi meis. (470-73)

So, my dear pimp, as I began to tell of that Pentetronic battle
when in a single day I killed with my own hands sixty thousand flying men.

Thus he begins. Caught out in the ambiguity of the word "flying," Antamoenides then avers that, indeed, he slew all of them and that is why no one else has ever seen flying men. Lycus, the pimp who is the audience for this invention, can express only admiration for so exceptional a facility with language (470-480). Thus Plautus calls attention both to the character of the soldier and to the characteristics of his language.

Repetitions of vast emotions and idle threats, of ideas and sounds, are common elements in the language created for the braggart warrior. Yet the total of all the violence uttered by the soldier does not account for his reputation. Not

only the slaves of Roman comedy, but the old men too, utter more threats and order more violence performed on stage than does the soldier. When Lycus the pimp, wearying of war stories, refuses to listen to further flights of fancy, Antamoenides is reduced to threatening him but the threats occupy only two lines (494-5). Later in the play Antamoenides also threatens to beat Anterastilis, for whom he has paid but whom he finds with another man (1289-91). The rest of Antamoenides' language, especially the long list of names he applies to the old man whom he takes to be his rival, has much in common with the food fantasies of a parasite (1312-14). The apology which he tenders when he finds that the rival is in fact the girl's father is most genuine. The soldier in *Truculentus* promises the greatest violence, but most of his threats are directed at Cyamus, a cook, who is merely the delivery boy for the lover Diniarchus. When Stratophanes does threaten his rival, Strabax, and Phronesium who is the object of everyone's affection, the lady wins the day by advising that "gold, not iron" will gain her approval (*Truc* 929). Therapontigonus may express the frustrations of all the warriors when he cries out,

> quid ego nunc faciam? quid refert me fecisse regibus
> ut me oboedirent, si hic me hodie umbraticus deriserit?(*Curc.* 555-56)
>
> What shall I do now? What good does it do me to have made monarchs
> mind me if this shady charlatan mocks me?

Threats are futile.

The more peaceful warriors, Pyrgopolynices and Thraso, deprived of violent language, resort to exaggerating their own charms. Thraso tells of a banquet where everyone who was present died laughing at his wit (*Eun* 432). Pyrgopolynices, the least violent of them all, says that *Pulcher* is his surname (*Mil* 1038) and complains that:

nimiast miseria nimi' pulchrum esse hominem.(68)

To be so magnificent a man is such a burden.

It is as if, lacking other weapons, Pyrgopolynices wields his beauty.

****

REFLECTION

However, what Pyrgopolynices **says** he wields is his shield. In the opening lines of *Miles Gloriosus* Plautus places in Pyrgopolynices' mouth a vital clue to the power of the braggart warrior.

Curate ut splendor meo sit clupeo clarior
quam solis radii ess olim quom sudumst solent,
ut, ubi usus ueniat, contra conserta manu
praestringat oculorum aciem in acie hostibus. (1-8)

Take care that my shield's sheen is brighter than the beams of the sun
usually are in sunny weather, that when need arises against close forces,
it may dazzle the eyes of the enemy lines.

The source of the warrior's apparent power is not alone or even largely in his humourous language, nor in his puny threats nor in his stiff and limited actions.

The glitter and shine of armour has empowered warriors in a classical tradition as old as Homer; however it is in Hesiod's story of Medusa that we see most clearly that it is reflection which is the source of a warrior's bravery. Perseus avoids looking directly at his enemy by looking at Medusa, or the reflection which he cares to see, in his shield. Ordinarily the advancing foe sees his own secret fears shining back from the warrior's hollow armour and is immobilized by his own terror. In the speech quoted above Plautus gives to Pyrgopolynices the language to make explicit the reason for both fearing and ridiculing the soldier. Both sides in a conflict see in their enemies' shields their own inadequacies. So, ultimately the soldier reflects to the lover and the lover's friends their own fears and fancies. It is what the lover and his friends say as a result – both to and about the warrior – as well as the homage which these characters pay to the soldier's role, which leaves the audience remembering a much larger figure than the one which strutted before it.

The braggart warrior is always a rival. His and his parasite's exaggeration is a tool in his competition for the woman. But they are not the only characters who exaggerate his desirability and his ferocity. His rivals, the true lover, the counsellors of that young lover, and the lady herself exaggerate for their own purposes. Their exaggeration of the warrior's importance is vital to the impression the audience retains.

Before Cleomachus appears on stage at line 842 of *Bacchides* he has been announced or described at least eight times and a large portion of the plot has centred about getting the money to pay him so that he will not carry off the courtesan. The courtesans express fear of his arrival five times. The parasite twice announces the arrival of the soldier and assures the lover, Pistoclerus, that the soldier will be "exploding," presumably with rage (603). The slave, Chrysalus, plays on an exaggerated fear of the soldier to extort 200 philippi from his old master. Considering that the object of his fear, Cleomachus, speaks less than twenty full lines and is on stage for less than one hundred lines, such fearful anticipation constitutes a role at least as large as that created by the soldier's on-stage presence.

The soldier in *Epidicus* utters no threats, is feared by no one but, like Cleomachus, he is a tool in someone else's plot. The foe here is the slave Epidicus who creates the personality of the soldier, first as,

Euboicus miles locuples (153)

a rich soldier from Euboea,

and then as,

auro opulentus, magnus miles Rhodius, raptor hostium, gloriosus. (300)

glorious with gold, a splendid soldier from Rhodes, a robber of enemies, a braggart.

Having used Epidicus to introduce the soldier's character, Plautus then has the other characters embroider the invention. Epidicus first describes the soldier as wealthy in order to stress the soldier's qualifications as a buyer for the young lover's excess music girl. When Epidicus later describes the soldier he stresses both wealth and violence in order to persuade his old master to fall in with the plot. That Epidicus' description is chosen with Periphanes' character in mind is clear when Periphanes meets the soldier. Periphanes is quick to point out that,

> nam strenuiori deterior si praedicat
> suas pugnas, de illius illae fiunt sordidae. (446-47)
>
> If an lesser soldier brags of his battles to a stronger one,
> his battles are made dispicable compared with the latter.

Periphanes has been a warrior in his time. The meeting of the old soldier, Periphanes, with the younger one occupies about thirty lines and not only enlarges but satirizes the role of bragging soldiers by making the old man a greater braggart than the young one. The young warrior complains:

> pol ego magis unum quaero meas quoi praedicem
> quam illum qui memoret suas mihi. (453-54)
>
> By Pollux, I myself rather am seeking someone to whom I can boast,
> than one who would recount his [battles] to me.

Of the less than thirty-four lines which the soldier speaks, more than one fifth are in this vain verbal joust with an old soldier, following which the young soldier discovers that he is, after all, not a rival for the girl who has been offered to him

and stalks out of the plot. The anticipation of wealth, violence, and bragging creates a soldier far greater than the one who plays such a sorry role.

Therapontigonus, the soldier in *Curculio,* is - like the previous two - a tool in a plot formed by a friend of the young lover, in this case the parasite, Curculio. The parasite dines with the soldier, drinks with the soldier and steals the soldier's signet ring to use in procuring enough money to buy the young lover's courtesan. It would appear that Therapontigonus' shield perfectly mirrors Curculio's desires. In *Curculio*, however, as in *Truculentus*, *Miles Gloriosus* and *Eunuchus,* it is clear that the soldier is not only announced by, and anticipated by the other characters, he is, in part, created by other characters in the play. It is Curculio who, for the benefit of Lyco the banker, invents a story about Therapontigonus delaying to have a seven foot statue of himself made in gold as a memento of his deeds in India (438-41), and it is Curculio who makes up seven lines of nonsense about Therapontigonus having conquered half the nations of the earth without aid and in the space of only twenty days (442-48)! Lyco may not be convinced that Therapontigonus is a great warrior but he is convinced that someone who babbles such rot is a proper companion for a warrior (452). Thus it is clear that not only is the warrior a recognizable stock character, he is also expected to be accompanied by a stock character whose language about the warrior is exaggerated. This is not to say that Therapontigonus does not boast. His raging entrance has been commented upon earlier, but it is to insist that much of the aggrandisement is not

done by the soldier himself and that it is highly ironic when later in the play Curculio complains that Therapontigonus is a braggart (633).

Curculio also illustrates a quite different method of enlarging the role of the soldier. When Therapontigonus finally enters (533) he is mimicked by Lyco, the banker who substitutes monetary terms where the soldier uses military ones:

non edepol nunc ego te mediocri macto infortunio,
sed eopse illo quo mactare soleo quoi nil debeo. (537)

By Pollux, now I afflict you with no modest misfortune
but with that very one with which I customarily afflict him to whom I owe - nothing.

Lyco, having already delivered up the money he was holding to a person he understood to be Therapontigonus' freedman, does not fear the soldier and exchanges insult for insult. Cappadox, the pimp, also mimics Therapontigonus and demonstrates the meeting of a pure conscience with the warrior:

at ita me uolsellae, pecten, speculum, calamistrum meum
bene me amassint meaque axitia linteumque extersui,
ut ego tua magnufica uerba neque istas tuas magnas minas
non pluris facio quam ancillam meam quae latrinam lauat.
ego illam reddidi qui argentum a te attulit. (577-81)

May my tweezers, comb, mirror, and curling iron, love me well
and my scissors and my linen towel for wiping –
I make no more of your fine words nor your huge threats than I do of the maid who cleans my toilet.
I have given up that girl to the man who brought the money from you.

Thus the enlarging of the soldier's role requires that other characters must contribute in various ways to it.

Antamoenides of *Poenulus* is something of an anomaly in the military line. He loves the sister of the girl loved by the young lover; so the soldier and the lover are not really rivals. Indeed, they do not meet until the girls are discovered by their father and proclaimed citizens and not courtesans. Although we hear of Antamoenides in the prologue (103), he is announced only once, two lines before he enters (468). He tells the amazing story about the flying men, quoted above; he threatens to brain the pimp Lycus who doesn't want to hear any more martial stories; he then disappears for over seven hundred lines during which he is spoken to once off stage because he is still waiting for lunch (615). When he reappears, having been balked of the lunch, he is more interested in the meal than the military. Hungry and angry he walks into the middle of a Carthaginian family reunion and recognizes that one of the girls, Anterastilis, is the one he wants, threatens her and her father, calls her father several smelly foods, backs down at once when threatened himself, and apologizes when he learns the truth of the situation. The whole group then joins forces against the pimp, with Antamoenides repeating many times that the reason for his hostility is that Lycus owes him a mina. If Antamoenides has a foe it is Lycus, the pimp, who apparently robs him of lunch. Without a foe or a rival Antamoenides must create his own character and it is not surprising to find him talking of food and acting as parasite to himself, a role which Lycus supports by calling attention to the language of the soldier:

optume hercle peiieras. (480)

By Hercules you lie hugely.

This is similar to the way that Lyco in *Curculio* calls attention to Curculio's language when he is acting as Therapontigonus' parasite.

In *Truculentus* it is the courtesan, Phronesium, who directs the plot. She manipulates her young lover, and the braggart warrior and a country boy so that she may have the best of three worlds. Her role contributes to the fearful anticipation of the soldier, by both the audience and those on stage, because she plays on Diniarchus' nervousness about the soldier as a rival. Although the audience is told in the prologue that Phronesium is leading a soldier to believe that he has a son, it is not until Diniarchus has three times worried about his rival that he is informed by Phronesium that she has not really borne the soldier's child but is pretending to have had the baby in order to keep the soldier interested (390).

illum inhiant omnes, illi est animus omnibus;
me nemo magi'respiciet, ubi is huc uenerit,
quasi abhinc ducentos annos fuerim mortuos. (339-41)

It's he everyone is longing for, slack-jawed; the wills of all of them are his.
No one will consider me any more, when he gets here,
than if I had been dead for two hundred years!

Thus frets Diniarchus and he continues to worry even after Phronesium explains her plot. Thus, even in plays where the soldier has a moderately large role the element of anticipation increases his importance.

When Stratophanes finally enters, Plautus gives to him an awareness of the language appropriate to soldiers:

scio ego multos memorauisse milites mendacium:

et Homeronida et postilla mille memorari potest,
qui et conuicti et condemnati flasis de pugnis sient. (484-86)

I myself know that many military men have fabricated fictions:
both Homeronides and after him thousands more can be recalled
who have been both convicted and condemned for fraudulent battles.

This awareness calls attention to the soldier's language but in no way reflects either self-awareness or awareness of his own situation. Plautus does not make Stratophanes conscious of his own bragging. Stratophanes says that he prefers deeds to words (483) and before he leaves the stage claims that there have "been enough words" (*verbum sat est.* 644). Because the soldiers are not self-aware the words which create them also frustrate them.

Stratophanes is one of the soldiers who must cope without a parasite, a parasite who could have provided words and information about the other characters. For this reason Stratophanes remains ignorant, thinking that his rivals are the enemy when his real foe is the courtesan who is manipulating all of her suitors to her advantage. Phronesium too wants a war of deeds, a war of gifts, not words. She looks into the soldier's shield and sees money. Phronesium will not play parasite because she wants war: a war of gifts, not words. It is in her best interests for the suitors to fear each other and she flatters them just enough to keep them from losing interest. The maid Astaphium is the first to egg the soldier on. It is she who says that Phronesium's baby, the soldier's putative son, was

natust machaeram et clupeum poscebat sibi; (506)

demanding for himself a sword and shield when he was born;

but then she turns on Stratophanes and reproves him for inquiring about what spoils the infant has brought home (508). Phronesium is even more confusing to him. He compliments her grandly by greeting her as if he were a god:

Mars peregre adueniens salutat Nerienum uxorem suam. (515)

Mars returning from abroad greets his wife, Neriene.

He kisses her and gives her presents but Phronesium's deliberate resentment reduces him to jibbering.

The exaggeration of the soldier's role is not concluded when he appears but continues for as long as he is useful to the plot. Cyamus, a servant of the lover Diniarchus, is capable of recognizing his master's rival and, like his master, is ready to point out Stratophanes' frightening characteristics:

hoc uide! dentibus frendit, icit femur;
num opsecro nam hariolust qui ipsus se uerberat? (602 - 03)

Look there, he's grinding his teeth and hitting his thigh!
I beg you - is he not possessed to thrash himself?

Later, having delivered his master's gifts and being for the moment in favour with Phronesium, Cyamus feels free, as did Lyco and Cappadox in *Curculio*, to mimic Stratophanes' military threats with those suitable to his own station in life:

tange modo, iam ego <te> hic agnum faciam et medium distruncabo.
si tu legioni bellator clues, at ego culinae clueo. (614 - 15)

Only touch me, and I myself will use you here as a lamb and carve you up.
If you are famous as a warrior in the legions, then I am famed as a warrior in the kitchen.

When the contest among the three rivals threatens to get out of hand, Stratophanes is brought to heel by the courtesan and left complaining not of the butchery but of the fleecing. The scene is replayed when Straophanes must also observe Strabax' gifts being graciously received by Phronesium. In the end Astaphium sums up the action as a war of gifts in which a fool and a madman compete to lose the most (950). In *Truculentus* it is clear that the less wealthy lovers fear the warrior. Those who do not fear the warrior gull him and mimic him. Although Stratophanes is on stage for two hundred and eighteen lines he is often in retreat and much of his 'teeth gnashing' and bragging is the creation of other characters.

In *Miles Gloriosus* Plautus presents Pyrgopolynices, his most fully developed bragging soldier, and as he presents him Plautus shows most clearly how the character is created by others. That said, it must be noted that Pyrgopolynices is not announced or feared before his first appearance. *Miles Gloriosus* begins with Pyrgopolynices speaking to his parasite – before the prologue – and then he is absent for eight hundred and sixty eight lines. Pyrgopolynices enters expressing concern for the care of his sword and shield. His language is florid and he does imply great military prowess, but it is Artotrogus, his parasite, who comments on Pyrgopolynices' "royal appearance" (*forma regia* 10), compares Pyrgopolynices to Mars (11), and tells of legions which Pyrgopolynices "blew away with a breath" (*difflauisi spiritu* 17-18). It is Artotrogus who then tells the audience that

Pyrgopolynices is an enormous liar and boaster (21-23), which may be true, but at this point in the play it is Artotrogus who has done most of the lying, has misdirected the audience, and has led the soldier on. It is Artotrogus who exaggerates the number of those whom Pyrgopolynices has slain and who invents the places from which they came (42-45). It is Artotrogus who introduces the idea that all women love Pyrgopolynices and tells Pyrgopolynices that women think he is Achilles or Achilles' brother (58-60).

No sooner have Artotrogus and Pyrgopolynices left the stage than Palaestrio, Pyrgopolynices' reluctant slave, enters and continues the fabrication of the soldier's character. Palaestrio says that his master is a

> gloriosus, inpudens, stercoreus, plenus peiiuri atque adulteri. (89-90)
>
> bragging, shameless, filthy man, full of lies and adultery.

an idea which he repeats at line 775 and embroiders as the plot thickens. Thus Palaestrio says that Pyrgopolynices says women run after him and what Palaestrio says may be true but the audience has only Palaestrio's and Artotrogus' word for it. Neither Artotrogus nor Palaestrio is disinterested. Artotrogus has admitted to wanting to eat (33), and Palaestrio in his prologue admits to being an agent for the young lover.

When Pyrgopolynices reappears Palaestrio takes over the role of flatterer from Artotrogus, who has ostensibly been sent to Seleusis with the troops. Palaestrio sings the praises of the substitute wife, Acroteleutium, calling her the one woman

worthy of Pyrgopolynices' beauty (968). For over two hundred lines Palaestrio piles flattery on Pyrgopolynices. To Palaestrio's flattery is added Milphidippa's fawning. She announces that Pyrgopolynices is an elegant and handsome soldier (998) and, coached by Palaestrio to

conlaudato formam et faciem et uirtues commemorato, (1027)

praise his form and face and to mention his accomplishments,

she tells Pyrgopolynices to his face how handsome and brave he is (1041). Coached by Palaestrio to be disdainful, Pyrgopolynices reflects Milphidippa's praise by saying,

magnum me faciam nunc quom illaec me illi[c] conlaudat. (1044-45)

I shall make myself important since she praises me.

The war of words accelerates as Palaestrio creates for Pyrgopolynices wealth piled higher than Mt. Aetna (1065) and the capacity to beget warriors who live eight hundred years or longer (1077-78). Then, with the entrance of Acroteleutium, the cycle of coaching and flattery is repeated, rising to the hilarious moment when, with Acroteleutium swooning before him, Pyrgopolynices agrees with Palaestrio's explanation that all women love the soldier at first sight. He admits that he is a descendant of Venus(1264-65).

Pyrgopolynices does not tell the most exaggerated stories about himself; he merely assents to the lies told to him about him. Keeping his head when Palaestrio histrionically declares,

tibi seruire malui multo quam alii libertus esse.(1356-57)

I preferred to be slave to you much more than to be the freedman of someone else.

would require a stronger head than the one which Palaestrio twice compares to a stone (236 and 1024). The final fawning should be a warning to Pyrgopolynices; it certainly provides a clear signal to the audience. A slave boy enters and salutes the soldier as

uir lepidissume, cumulate commoditate, praeter ceteros duo di quem curant. (1382-83)

most elegant hero, crowned with courtesy, whom two gods above all others care for.

The two gods whom Pyrgopoynices claims as patrons are Mars and Venus and the young slave is urging Pyrgopolynices to make love to a married woman. Like Mars, Pyrgopolynices is disarmed, not in this case by the wiles of a woman, though these have been plentifully employed, but by basking in the reflected vengefulness of his foes. His character is in large part the creation of the enemies who, having created him, then destroy him.

The techniques which Terence employs to create a bragging soldier are not significantly different from those used by Plautus. Terence mentions his braggart warrior several times before he lets Thraso stride onto the stage one third of the way through *Eunuchus*. The prologue explains to the audience that the bragging

soldier type is as old as Menander and is not copied from Plautus; this is a comment designed to remind the audience of Plautus' warriors just in case they had forgotten to make such a comparison. Thaïs introduces the soldier as someone with whom she's had an affair (125), as the buyer of the girl she treats as her sister (132,136), and as the person from whom she must free her young charge (140). Thaïs asks the young lover, Phaedria, to let her continue her liaison with the soldier (150-151) until her purpose is accomplished. Thus is Thraso thoroughly introduced before he steps on stage.

Phaedria and Thraso are rivals for Thaïs' attention. Thaïs, however, sees Thraso entirely as an economic proposition. She is, therefore, more than the object of the two lovers' affection. Because she wants to take Pamphila from Thraso she is herself an enemy, a rival of a different sort.

Gnatho, whose name declares his importance as an eater and a talker, plays the parasite's usual role, despite his feeling that he has invented his method. The only difference between Gnatho in *Eunuchus* and Artotrogus in *Miles Gloriosus* is that Gnatho compliments Thraso's mental capacities, his wit and repartee, while Artotrogus invents for Pyrgopolynices physical qualities, beauty and exploits. Like the other aides to soldiers, Gnatho goads his soldier companion, urging him on, and thereby creates a character much larger than the one which actually exists on stage. Gnatho laughs at Thraso's efforts at wit, and convinces him that he is clever. The audience, directed by the slave Parmeno, laughs at both of them.

The mock battle in which the mock warrior is publicly defeated follows a lunch to which Thraso concludes that Thaïs has brought yet another rival, Chremes. The anger of the warrior is announced by a female slave, Dorias, who enters fearing lest Thraso

> turbam faciat aut vim Thaidi.(616)
>
> make a disturbance or an attack on Thaïs.

Dorias is followed by Thaïs who says twice that she is afraid that Thraso will come for Pamphila (739, 572). Chremes also announces his fears of Thraso (755) and wants to go for reinforcements (764). Chremes' fear is physical. Thaïs' fear is for her property. Thus the only on-stage battle involving a braggart warrior is prepared for in the same way as the warrior's entrances usually are, by voicing the fears or expectations of the other characters.

The presentation of the bragging soldier in battle provides surprising if predictable conclusions. The first surprise comes with Thaïs assuring Chremes that Thraso only "seems to be a man" (*vir videatur esse* 785). In light of her part in creating the panic her sudden realization that Thraso is harmless is puzzling until we realize that her fear of Thraso has never been physical and that with the arrival of Chremes she is secure in her identification of Pamphila's status as a freeborn woman. Thaïs is not only barricaded in the house; she is also secure behind the fortress of the girl's brother, Chremes, who will claim Pamphila as his sister. Certainty of their own strength is always the strongest armour the rivals have in

the struggle against the bragging soldier. The security may be physical or psychological. In this case it is both.

Even more surprising is Terence's clear understanding and articulation of the bragging soldier's nature. When Thraso does appear he is nearly incoherent, providing a verbal failure to go with the physical spectacle of his household servants armed with mop and crowbar. The soldier is not only incompetent; he is incapable. Thraso's commendable military theory is summed up in his comment that

omnia prius experiri quam armis sapientem decet. (789)

for a wise man it is fitting to try everything before arms.

Gnatho, as might be expected, praises Thraso's tactical genius (783) and assures him that he never spends time with Thraso without "going away more learned"(*abs te abeam* 791). When Thraso is pushed to the brink of physical attack (796) he rouses his physical rival, Chremes. Chremes, armed with proof that Pamphila is his sister, finds strength and courage to parry Thraso's attack. When Chremes counter-attacks it is Gnatho, the creator, who protects Thraso, his creation (802-804), and when the troops have retired it is Gnatho who works out the *ménage à six* which makes everyone happy in the end. Like Plautus' Stratophanes, Thraso is proof that the bragging soldier not only fails in deeds, he also fails at the very stuff which creates him. When his foes no longer look with awe or admiration into his shining shield he is lost. Without the language of his

foes he ceases to exist. He is, as Thaïs says, "a huge nothing" (*nebulo magnus* 785) and the word that Terence uses for "nothing" is *nebulo* with its overtones of fog or mist or smoke. Thraso is, as are the other warriors, an insubstantial thing – a creation of smoke and mirrors.

****

ASSOCIATION

It is important to note that not all of the military language in Plautus and Terence is directly associated with the soldier figure. Thus the impression which audiences gain of bragging warriors may be created by bragging slaves or even by bragging courtesans! There are many short passages using military language as metaphor. Among the more amusing of these is in *Truculentus* where the maid compares a lover to a hostile city requiring seige (170). Some of the most military speeches are made neither by the soldier, nor by those speaking to and about him. As the opening scheme is plotted in *Miles Gloriosus,* the old man, Periplectomenus, exhorts Palaestrio, the slave, in a long military metaphor (219-227). Like a superior officer, Periplectomenus urges Palaestrio to take charge of the situation and Palaestrio accepts the order (230). Palaestrio returns to the military metaphor on at least four other occasions (267, 596, 813, and 1153). Thus Periplectomenus and Palaestrio add at least another thirty-six lines of military

language to an already military play. Before Therapontigous is ever mentioned in *Curculio*, Curculio the parasite at his first entrance makes an nineteen-line speech comparing himself to a general or despot in importance and threatening to knock out of his way anyone using the street (280-299). Similarly, less than twenty-five lines after Cleomachus' final exit in *Bacchides,* the slave Chrysalus enters and for fifty lines compares himself to Ulysses and Agamemnon, planning and executing battle on a Troy which he identifies as "this stupid old man of ours" (*nostro seni hic stolido* 945). Not content with this *tour de force* Chrysalus continues the metaphor from line 1053 to 1058 and again from 1068 to 1075. Thus, by far the most martial impression in *Bacchides* is made by the slave.

Indeed there may be extensive passages of military language in plays which have no bragging soldier in the cast. Tranio, the slave in *Mostellaria*, compares himself to Alexander and Agathocles (775-77). Sosia, the slave to a true warrior in *Amphitruo*, enters in a fearful parody of the usual swaggering soldier (153-263). For one hundred lines he tells a story which alternates between expressing his own cowardice and telling the horrific account of Amphitruo's successful battle. Sosia thus draws attention to the stock comic character's behaviour while contrasting it to the behaviour of a true warrior. Pseudolus, the slave in *Pseudolus*, announces his plans in military terms:

priu'quam istam pugnam pugnabo, ego etiam prius
dabo aliam pugnam claram et commemorabilem. (524-25)

Before I fight that fight I first will provide another famed and fabulous fight.

Pseudolus continues with his metaphor sporadically and reaches an eighteen-line description of the troops which he has marshalled in his mind as well as his plans for deploying them (575-592). At lines 1050 and 1063 the battle description is recalled by both Pseudolus and his master, Simo, who refers to his slave as Ulysses. The slave Pseudolus is, therefore, far more martial than the Macedonian soldier who is Calidorus' rival for the courtesan in this play. The soldier, Polymachaero-plagides, does not appear at all but is represented by a real deputy, Harpax, and a substitute deputy, Simia. Both of these deputies wear military capes and sprinkle their speeches with military terms. The audience may not even miss the absent warrior when the rivalry, the language, and the suspense are provided so well by the characters who do appear. In *Captivi,* Ergasilus the parasite combines boxing, military, and food terms as, in an excess of joy, he rushes to tell Hegio that the latter's son has returned safely:

nam meumst ballista pugnum, cubitus catapultast mihi, umerus aris,

For my fist is a ballista, and my forearm is a catpult and my shoulder is a battering ram,

he begins, and continues with such threats as,

tum piscatores, qui praebent populo piscis foetidos, ...
eis ego ora uerbabo surpiculis piscariis.

The fishmongers who offer the people putrid fish...
I myself shall smack their faces with their own fishbaskets.

He finally rises to calling himself "a more regal king of kings" (*regum rex regalior*) which is the sort of claim more appropriate to the grandiose dreams of the soldier than to the food fantasies of the parasite (796-825).

*****

LOSER

The result of the warrior's emotions and actions is always the same. He loses. He always loses sole title to the woman. Cleomachus receives money rather than the woman he had hired for a year. The wealthy soldier in *Epidicus*, who is introduced as being eager to buy a spare music girl, leaves when he finds that Acropolistis the courtesan is fond of the young lover and, what is more, has been set free. In *Curculio* Therapontigonus finds that the money which has been banked to pay for a woman has been collected by Curculio and that the woman he loves is his sister. He retrieves the money from the pimp but loses the woman to her lover. Antamoenides in *Poenulus* discovers that the woman he loves is the freeborn daughter of Hanno the Carthaginian. He offers a genuine apology for any apparently threatening language and then marches off with the pimp to find a substitute woman. Stratophanes and Thraso each agree to share the woman with her lover and, as these soldiers are also generous in other ways, they subsidize the arrangements. They not only lose sole possession of the women; sometimes they lose money too. Pyrgopolynices loses the most. He is tricked into letting the

woman go. He also urges her to take valuable clothing and jewels with her. He is then physically threatened for having been so gullible.

******

MONEY

The bragging soldier is always a rival and the rivalry is associated with money. With the exception of Antamoenides, the soldier is usually willing to spend quite freely. (Cleomachus is not required to spend; he hardly appears on stage long enough to spend. He is used as an excuse to get money out of Nicobolus.) It is worth noting that the association of the soldier with money is common enough so that in *Persa* the slave, Sagaristio, when he has money, adopts the bragging manner of a soldier (307). This possession of money makes the soldier character useful as a dangerous rival to a young and impecunious lover. It also makes the soldier a target for anyone, including a dramatist, needing money to solve a problem.

THE SUPPORTING CAST

By reason of his opposition to them in the plot the warrior is often associated with young lovers, courtesans, pimps and the slaves of these characters. In discussing the language which creates the soldier I have already touched on some

of the relationships between the creation and his creators but it may be useful to look more systematically at these relationships.

*

FOOD FANTASIES

The bragging soldier, as I have suggested, is often magnified by those who oppose him. They use him and flatter him with creative imaginations far greater than his own. The character who is most adept at this flattery is the parasite. Indeed, in five of the seven plays in which a warrior appears the warrior is associated with a parasite. and it is this character who is responsible for the most fantastic flattery. The parasite looks into Pyrgopolynices' shield and sees regular meals. The parasite, in return for sustenance, creates a soldier who is larger than life. (Naturally, though perhaps ironically, this creation enlarges the parasite at the same time.) In *Bacchides*, *Curculio*, *Miles Gloriosus*, and *Eunuchus* the flattery is provided, at least in part by the parasite. In *Peonulus* Antamoenides himself slips into the language of the parasite as he worries about getting lunch and as he uses the language of food to curse Hanno. The association of parasite and soldier would seem to have been well established by Plautus' time and he calls attention to it in *Curculio* (*Curc* 452).

Soldier and parasite may borrow each other's language. The parasite may use the language of the soldier as Curculio does, for example, in his opening soliloquy

in *Curculio* (280-298), or as does Ergasilus in *Captivi* as he hurries to tell Hegio that the captive is returning (796-825). Ergasilus mixes the language of the military with the language of food and markets.

While the parasite might be expected to worry about food, his concerns or at least his associations with food are shared by the soldier. For Therapontigonus and Thraso meals are vital occasions in the action. Antamoenides spends most of a play waiting for lunch and then steals from the pimp enough wealth to buy his own food. Stratophanes does battle with a cook and, in *Bacchides,* Chrysalus threatens Cleomachus with a spit. Collybiscus, the bailiff in *Poenulus,* tells the audience that while he was disguised as a warrior he took 'booty' from Lycus the pimp. The booty which he took was dinner (802-805).

Characters other than the bragging soldier may have parasites; characters other than bragging soldiers and parasites – slaves in particular – may use language which is more appropriate to other characters; indeed, role switching and misappropriation of language is an important element in comedy. However, the regular association and interdependence of language and role is peculiar to the warrior and his parasite.

**

EIGHT LOVERS LOVING

Like the parasite, the young lover wants something from the bragging soldier but his relationship to the soldier is clearly very different. While the lovers occasionally dislike and often fear their soldier rivals, the soldiers are usually blissfully unaware that there is competition for the woman.

Epidicus first mentions the rich soldier from Euboea to his young master, Stratippocles, as a means of disposing of an extra music girl and in the process earning enough money for the lover's new fancy. The soldier is never aware of the identity of Stratippocles and knows only that his mistress has been purchased by the old man Periphanes. The soldier is willing to pay for his property and leave but discovers that Epidicus has tricked both him and the old man with a cheap substitute. On the other hand, the soldier whom the young lover never meets might well be a figment of his slave's imagination.

Lycus, the pimp in *Poenulus*, announces that there is a warrior rival seconds before Antamoenides enters. The audience learns that Antamoenides is buying Anterastilis before the young lover, Agorastocles, knows that a warrior exists. Agorastocles is concentrating on a scheme to free Adelphasium and her sister, Anterastilis, from the pimp. Agorastocles carries through his entire entrapment of

Lycus without the faintest idea that the soldier is inside Lycus' house waiting for lunch and Anterastilis. Agorastocles' slave, Milphio, then learns that the two girls are really freeborn and he prepares a second attack on the pimp which is unexpectedly aided by the appearance of the father of the young ladies. Agorastocles has a promise from Hanno, Adelphium's father, before Antamoenides' presence is known to any but the audience and the pimp. When Antamoenides emerges from Lycus' house he finds the Carthaginians all embracing and his anger is first directed at Hanno who is hugging his long lost daughter Anterastilis. When the activity is explained, everyone turns on the pimp. Thus the lover and the soldier exchange one hostile speech apiece, and then, no longer rivals, both join forces to punish the pimp.

Curculio, the young lover's parasite, who has been sent to get money from a friend of the young lover, announces to the audience and to the young lover that he has failed to return with the necessary funds and that a soldier has bought the woman. However, as quickly as he announces the bad news, Curculio presents the germ of a scheme for defeating the soldier. Curculio uses the soldier's ring to pay for and collect the courtesan before Therapontigonus' first entrance. Therapontigonus is furious but his fury is aimed at Curculio. Therapontigonus does not acknowledge Phaedromus as competition and when he discovers that the courtesan is really his sister he is quite cavalier in his granting of permission for her

to marry her lover. This soldier too is more intent on getting a refund from the pimp than on worrying about affection.

The Bacchis sisters beg Pistoclerus for help so that their soldier will not carry one of them home with him. Pistoclerus withstands this coaxing for fifty lines. He describes a series of decadent substitutions, including the substitution of a couch for his horse and a whore for his shield, by which he fears he will lose his status as a real soldier. In time, however, he capitulates totally (50-93). Pistoclerus enjoys his new-found love for nearly five hundred lines with only minor inconveniences until Cleomachus' parasite arrives. Pistoclerus and his friend Mnesilochus then begin a frantic search for the money to pay for the courtesan. The lovers worry and make love while all the practical details of the search are undertaken by Chrysalus the slave; but no matter. Cleomachus' reaction to his parasite's report of a rival sounds more like outrage than like jealousy:

quae haec factiost? (843)

What kind of performance is this?

he demands as he enters and threatens to exsanguinate both Mnesilochus and his Bacchis unless he receives two hundred philippi at once. Cleomachus' rage is more a response to loss of property than a result of any feeling for the courtesan. His interest in Bacchis and his antipathy for Mnesilochus is so limited that he capitulates the instant he is offered his two hundred philippi. Indeed, in return for instant payment, Cleomachus is willing to accept into the bargain insults from

Chrysalus. The bragging soldier may have money and may be generous but he is also not a spendthrift; therefore, because affection is not an emotion the soldier feels, he may be persuaded to release the courtesan to the lover or his associates. The young lovers are less interested in money than in affection. They are quite impractical and it is their slaves or friends who engage in the sordid business which connects money with the courtesan. Money may be the means to acquire the object of his affection; money may be required in the war against the soldier; however, the lover does not deal with money, only with love and anxiety.

The lover in *Pseudolus* learns of his rival in a letter from his courtesan. Calidorus, the lover, expresses much self-pity but little feeling about the soldier. Both Calidorus and his slave direct their animosity at the pimp who promises to sell the girl to Calidorus despite the bargain with the soldier if Calidorus can come up with the necessary money. The schemes are played out upon the soldier's deputy Harpax, while the soldier himself never suspects that he has any competition.

Pyrgopolynices, in his long scene before the prologue, makes no mention of his competition, nor indeed of the courtesan he is keeping. It is in Palaestio's prologue that the audience learns of the existence of Philocomasium and her recently arrived lover; Palaestrio was once the young lover's slave and is now the property of Pyrgopolynices. Thus he is the only character with information about both of the rivals. Pleusicles, the lover, does not appear until the play is nearly half

done. By that time his slave has already established the existence of an illusory twin sister for Philocomasium. Palaestrio explains to Pleusicles and his elderly friend, Periplectomenus, the plan to make Pyrgopolynices fall in love with a new courtesan and dispose of Philocomasium. Thus while Pleusicles is aware of Pyrgopolynices and has a part to play in the abduction or rescue of Philocomasium, the soldier remains completely unaware of the young lover. Pyrgopolynices is capable of suspicion, as his attention to the closeness of Philocomasium and her lover/messenger reveals, but the personality which Plautus creates for Pyrgopolynices is incapable of acknowledging that he might have serious competition for a woman.

The lover, Diniarchus, opens *Truculentus* with a long complaint about courtesans in general and his courtesan, Phronesium, in particular. Part of his complaint is that Phronesium has taken a Babylonian soldier as a lover. The soldier has more money than Diniarchus and, in order to extract even more gifts from the warrior, Phronesium is pretending to have born his baby. Diniarchus knows all of this and continues to dote on his courtesan. He fears the cash of the soldier and the loss of Phronesium's affections but is party to her confidence and her plans. Stratophanes is one of the rare bragging soldiers who worries about the competition. But then he is dealing with a rare courtesan. Phronesium is not the property of a pimp but is in business for herself. It is in Phronesium's interest that he be aware and she plays on his desire to have sole possession. Stratophanes

observes Cyamus bringing gifts from Diniarchus and later meets Strabax bringing gifts. He does not meet Diniarchus. Stratophanes threatens violence to both Cyamus and Strabax but is controlled by Phronesium who channels his aggression into a competition of gift giving. Diniarchus is surprised by his discovery of a second rival, the country boy Strabax, but again he rails against the courtesan rather than against his rival. When Diniarchus discovers that it is his son that Phronesium is using to fool the soldier, he wastes no time using the information to gain Phronesium's affection and her promise to be available whenever he can escape from his new wife. In this play, then, although the lover and the soldier never meet, they are aware of each other. Stratophanes does threaten but only those persons whom he sees. Diniarchus' emotions are fear and anger: fear that he will lose his love and anger at the way she treats him.

Eunuchus too opens with the lover discussing his feelings about his courtesan. Instead of a soliloquy, however, Terence uses a dialogue between Phaedria and his slave, Parmeno. The former proclaims his misery and the latter cynically mocks the lover and his beloved. Thaïs, like Phronesium, confides her plans to her lover asking that he not interfere with her efforts to free her adopted sister from the soldier, Thraso. Thraso is aware of his rival; Gnatho reminds him that the mere mention of Phaedria makes him burn (438). However, the person who inadvertently drives Thraso berserk is Chremes, Pamphila's brother. Because Thaïs wants to speak to him and have him identify his sister as freeborn she invites

Chremes to her luncheon with Thraso. Thraso's reaction is an attack on Thaïs' house to retrieve Pamphila, his gift to his courtesan. Phaedria does not appear on stage with Thraso until all of the dust has settled. When they do appear together it is Phaedria who is aggressive and Thraso who is conciliatory. Thraso asks only to share a place in Thaïs' household and this Gnatho negotiates with Phaedria by pointing out that everyone could live happily ever after on the soldier's purse.

There is, for the most part, very little interaction on stage between the young lover and the bragging soldier. In *Bacchides*, *Epidicus*, *Truculentus*, and *Pseudolus* the young lover and his rival are never on stage at the same time; indeed Calidorus, the lover in *Pseudolus* is not on stage with the soldier's deputy either. In *Miles Gloriosus* the two characters are on stage together briefly at the end of the play and each is busy with his own devices. Pleusicles is removing his darling Philocomasium from Ephesus and Pyrgopolynices is pleased to have her hustled her off so that he may get on with his next affair. Both characters are engaged in the same action but for very different reasons. In *Poenulus* and *Eunuchus* the soldier and the lover do not meet until the play is nearly over and the lover has gained his objective. In *Curculio* too, Therapontigonus does not meet Phaedromus until after Curculio has rescued the courtesan from the lover. Therapontigonus is angry, first at the banker, then at the pimp, and finally at Curculio, who has tricked him. Therapontigonus' anger actually leads to his hitting Curculio in the only textual evidence of the soldier committing physical violence.

Despite his anger Therapontigonus does not threaten Phaedromus even though the young lover curses the soldier for not immediately agreeing that Planesium is freeborn (615-621). When soldiers are aware of competition or are angry they are likely to threaten to attack the wrong persons: a brother, or a father, or almost anyone but the young lover. The soldier's narrow range of emotion limits him to being angry, rather than jealous, and because he has very little intelligence or imagination his anger is directed at the nearest target.

The young lovers are in love. They are young. They are each designated *adulescens* in the casts of characters. Pistoclerus, for example, fears losing his innocence to his Bacchis, and when during the opening scenes of the play he submits to her charms he must grow up and free himself from the authority of his tutor. The lovers may be used to create anticipation or suspense about the soldier, especially in *Truculentus* and *Eunuchus,* but they are given minor roles in the devices which free their women. Agorastocles in *Peonulus* carries out the plot briefly sketched for him by his slave; however, that plot is not instrumental in bringing about the vital recognitions of the play. Usually, however, the business of the plot is entrusted to someone else while the lovers love and wait for a friend or a slave or a happy accident to achieve the courtesan for them. In this situation, lectured by fathers, slaves, and courtesans, it is not surprising that the young lovers appear immature and petulant, and perhaps not altogether attractive.

The young lovers, however, differ from their definitely less attractive soldier rivals in two important ways. The young lovers are generous and their generosity is potent, both in terms of achieving their desires and in terms of sexual sucess. The soldiers are willing to spend money; however, they often receive little in return. Although the lovers are not always models of fidelity they are willing to give everything for love, even what they do not own. They are capable of love and are loved in return. The warriors occasionally go to bed with the courtesans. Clearly Stratophanes thinks that he is the father of Phronesium's baby. However, more often there is no evidence that the soldiers have made use, at least recently, of their property. And there is no evidence of either love or progeny as a result of these interactions. On the other hand, several young lovers are responsible for illegitimate children; these are products of festivals and affairs. The only child featured in any of the plays with a warrior is the child in *Truculentus*, and that child is the son, not of Stratophanes the warrior, who is told that it is his, but of Diniarchus the young lover.

***

TWO FACES OF EVE

The courtesan is the object of the rivalry between the soldier and the lover, and usually the soldier has the prior claim. He has chosen the courtesan, contracted for her, put a deposit on her or owned her before the play begins. Not

surprisingly in this sort of relationship, where the courtesan is property or object, the woman's feelings for the warrior are less than affectionate.

She may express fear. Thus the Bacchis sisters beg Mnesilochus and Pistoclerus for rescue from Cleomachus. That Cleomachus threatens to kill both Bacchis and her lover if he does not get the two hundred golden philippi which he paid for the courtesan's services speaks volumes about his love or affection for her as a person. Phoenicium in *Pseudolus* weeps when Simia removes her from the pimp's house, presumably because she thinks she is being delivered to the Macedonian soldier. The Carthaginian, Anterastilis, when she sees Antamoenides, cries to her father,

male ego metuo miluos (*Poen* 1292)

I am badly terrified by birds of prey.

She does not know that Antamoenides has threatened to beat her until she's black and blue (*Poen* 1289-91), but she knows who he is and she distrusts his angry reputation as well as his appearance. Philocomesium, in *Miles Gloriosus*, has been abducted by Pyrgopolynices before the action begins. The activities of Palaestrio, the slave, are entirely directed to obtaining her release. Although Philocomasium exhibits much energy, wit, and guile in obtaining her release, when she is reunited with her lover she is so delighted that she faints repeatedly and nearly ruins the device. These women are victims who, although they may be devious or

manipulative, are portrayed as content to depend on the lover, or his friends, or his slave, to rescue them from the soldier.

Like the lovers, six of the eight courtesans spend remarkably little time on stage with their bragging soldiers. In *Pseudolus* the courtesan, like the soldier, does not appear at all. The soldier in *Epidicus* is never on stage with the illusive Acropolistis and only for an instant with the hired music girl. In *Miles Gloriosus* and *Poenulus* the women appear only after the plots have freed them from the warriors. In *Curculio* it is Planesium who precipitates the meeting with the soldier. She has already escaped the pimp and now wants the soldier to help her recover her status as a free woman. The women who are the property of pimps appear as victims with an antipathy to their unwanted lovers, or they are created as objects with no feeling for their warrior clients.

Phronesium in *Truculentus* and Thaïs in *Eunuchus* are neither victims nor objects; they are self-employed working women. They want their lovers to compete and thus it is in these plays that the soldiers are aware of the lovers. These women are affectionate to lovers and rivals but their affection has its price. Phronesium is not afraid of Stratophanes; she uses him. She prepares an elaborate scheme which soon sweeps away his possessions, dust and all, says the prologue (19). She pretends to have had a son by the soldier and thus hopes to derive not only support for the baby but expensive gifts for herself. She is not afraid of the soldier but of course her other lovers are fearful of Stratophanes, if only because

they must keep up to him in the contest of gift giving. Phronesium's maid, Astaphium, states that the successful courtesan

> ...similem sentis esse...,
> quemquem hominem attigerit, profecto ei aut malum aut damnum dari.
> numquam amatoris meretricem oportet caussam noscere,
> quin, ubi nil det, pro infrequente eum mittat militia domum. (227-230)

> ought to be like a thorn bush
> to give whatever man she touches either misfortune or damage immediately
> and never should the courtesan acknowledge the pleading of her lover:
> where he gives nothing, she should send him home for irregular service.

Astaphium is the maid who treats lovers like cities under seige, and she is much given to military metaphor. Diniarchus says of Astaphium and her mistress that courtesans are much "like vultures" (*quasi uolturii* 337). This image is similar to the comparison with a kite which Anterastilis uses in *Poenulus* when she sees the soldier Antamoenides approaching. The aggressive woman, like the military man, may use or be described in martial terms, and she may be feared.

In their mercenary or practical approach to human relations, the independent women and the soldiers in the comedies have much in common, including a certainty of their beauty and their accomplishments. The admiration and mistrust of his courtesan with which Diniarchus, the lover, opens *Truculentus* is as important to the creation of the courtesan's character as the flattery of the parasite is to the creation of a soldier. However, Phronesium, in forming a scheme and directing the players, also has traits in common with the clever slave:

edepol commentum male, quomque eam rem in corde agito,...
nullam rem oportet dolose adgrediri
nisi astute accurateque exsequare. (451, 461-62)

By Pollux,

says Phronesium, who also swears like a soldier,

this is a wicked falsehood when I turn it over in my mind...
but nothing ought to be undertaken deceitfully
unless the trick is totally and carefully executed.

Her self-conscious arrangement of her maids and herself for Stratophanes' entrance bespeaks that awareness of a play within a play which N.W. Slater analyzes in certain slaves.[5] Like the clever slaves, Phronesium is sure of her abilities and unafraid of giving offense by stating her opinions. She is equally rude to and demanding of both Stratophanes and Diniarchus. She demands all that they have. She is somewhat gentler with Strabax, the novice lover, but she makes it clear to all her clients that her interests are mercenary. She controls the aggression of Stratophanes and directs the action of the play generally until the moment when Diniarchus is revealed as the father of the baby so necessary to her plans. This puts her in his power but she still maintains enough control to juggle the three lovers to a successful conclusion.

---

[5] N.W. Slater, *Plautus in Performance* (Princeton University Press, 1985).

Thaïs in *Eunuchus* is the other self-employed woman. Because she is trying to protect Pamphila from Thraso, she schemes. She, like Phronesium, confides in the young and flattering lover and asks him to co-operate with her plan. Thaïs is given a soliloquy in which she assures the audience of her sincerity and her love for Phaedria. Thaïs is more complex than Phronesium because she does not entirely control the action; there is another woman in the play. Terence uses Thaïs' desire to free her young ward as an excuse for her mercenary behaviour but he allows her to control only the part of the plot involving the bragging soldier. Thaïs discovers Pamphila's brother and arranges to free the girl from Thraso. Thaïs also stands up to the angry Thraso and directs the defense of her house. On the other hand she is a victim, or at least Pamphila is a victim, of the slave in the play. While Thaïs is concentrating on her plot, Parmeno and Chaerea play out the rape of Pamphila and create havoc with Thaïs' plans to win the favour of an important local family. The final negotiations not only allow all of the men to share Thraso's money, they also allow Thaïs to fulfill her desire to gain entry to local society. To do this she must lose control of the action. A balance between the lovers, the warrior, and the slave are thus achieved not only in the play but in Thaïs herself. In order to become part of society she must surrender her power. Independent courtesans meet and control soldiers; victims do not.

****

SLAVISH PARTS

The most obvious difference between soldiers and slaves involves the length of time which clever slaves spend on stage. Chrysalus in *Bacchides*, Palinurus in *Curculio*, the eponymous Pseudolus, and Parmeno in *Eunuchus*, each is on stage for a longer time than any other character in the play. Palaestrio is on stage in *Miles Gloriosus* for approximately 1180 lines of the 1430 lines of the play.

The slave character does more than appear for long periods; he talks. Chrysalus speaks more than 400 of the 620 lines during which he is present. Epidicus speaks almost 300 lines in a very short play (731 lines). Pseudolus, who is on stage for nearly three quarters of a play, speaks almost half the lines spoken while he is present, a few of them in Greek! Palaestrio is not only exceptional for the amount of time he spends on stage; while he is there he speaks almost half of the lines. Terence's practice is not significantly different. Parmeno speaks just under one third of the lines spoken while he is on stage. What all this adds up to is that the average Roman, when he went to the theatre, expected, and presumably enjoyed, a slave playing a large part. It also suggests that playwrights were expected to create such characters with some frequency. Mercury, a slave with very distinguished bloodlines, points out in his prologue to *Amphitruo* that, despite the presence of kings and gods, if a slave has a part in a play it can be expected to be a comedy – the reverse is, at least in part, also true.

Whereas the soldier is always a wealthy rival, the slave in these plays is always helping the young lover; often his aid requires his finding money to combat the soldier's wealth. The use of the slave in this way presupposes that the young master has exhausted all other means of gaining his desires, and that to help his master the slave must use his wits. The slave's wit is made manifest in speech. Thus, while the soldier is the creation of language, the slave is made to use language creatively.

Compared to the lies of the slave the limited exaggerations of the bragging soldier pale. The slave's deceit is on a grand scale and if materials are in short supply they must be invented. Chrysalus in *Bacchides* says of himself as slave:

> non mihi isti placent Parmenones, Syri,
> qui duas aut trus minas auferunt eris.
> nequiu nil est quam egens consili seruos, nisi habet multipotens pectus...
> inprobus com inprobus [sit,] harpaget furibus
> [furetur] quod queat. (649-57)
>
> I don't like those petty Parmenos and Syruses who pinch two or three minae from their masters. Nothing is more useless than a slave without a scheme unless he has very forceful faculties....Let him be dishonest with the dishonest, let him steal from robbers.

Pseudolus, who is quite open about his deceit, warns everyone to beware of him and not to believe him (128). He also suggests the creativity of his language when he compares himself to a poet:

> sed quasi poeta, tabulas quom cepit sibi,
> quaerit quod nusquam gentiumst, reperit tamen,
> facit illud ueri simile quod mendacium est,
> nunc ego poeta fiam. (401-404)

> As the poet when he takes up his writing tablet seeks what is nowhere in the world, yet finds - makes that which is a lie like the truth;
> now will I become myself a poet.

All of the clever slaves have some facility with language. Many of them comment on their facility in the same way that Pseudolus does.

A character with so much skill and so much opportunity is clearly intended as a focus of attention. Palaestrio gets a good start on his domination of *Miles Gloriosus* by being the character to give the prologue. He is the only slave in Plautus or Terence to do this in soliloquy, with the exception of Mercury in *Amphitruo,* who is, after all, despite being a servant also a god. Palaestrio is thus established as commentator and master of ceremonies. The audience sees the play as he directs, and this means that despite Palaestrio's clearly stated bias, the audience accepts his assessment of the soldier as a

> gloriosus, inpudens, stercoreus, plenus peiiuri atque adulteri. (89-90)
> bragging, shameless, filthy man, filled with lies and corruption.

Before the play begins, however, Palaestrio has taken the most significant actions: he has written to his previous master, the young lover, who has arrived and is living next door, and Palaestrio has made a hole through the wall from the courtesan's room to the house where the lover is. The creation of the passage was, Palaestrio says, the suggestion of the old gentleman, Periplectomenus (44), but this is quickly forgotten as Palaestrio takes over the direction of the play. The

technique which Palaestrio says he will use on a suspicious fellow slave is the technique which he also uses on the soldier and the audience:

> ei nos facetis fabricis et doctis dolis
> glaucumam ob oculos obiciemus eumque ita
> faciemus ut quod uiderit non uiderit. (147-49)
>
> With our clever craft and skilful skulduggery we shall hold up blindness
> before his eyes and thus make him so that what he has seen he hasn't seen.

The soldier holds up a mirror for reflection; the slave projects with his powerful mind a hologram creating out of illusion a willing blindness or confusion. Thus though Philcomasium darts about playing two roles and coming up with the idea to make the other servants drunk, though Periplectomenus finds two women and trains them in their roles to trap Pyrgopolynices, though Pleusicles carries Philcomasium off, Periplectomenus says that Palaestrio is the arch-architect (901) and everyone, on stage and off, is willing to believe him. In this role the slave not only spends much time on stage directing the soldier, he also creates the situations in which the soldier functions. Palaestrio winds Pyrgopolynices up and sends him off like a toy Mars to be caught with a phony Venus and beaten for his lack of perception.

Pistoclerus, the young lover in *Bacchides*, has two slaves. Lydus, the tutor, is horrified at his young charge's falling in love with a courtesan. Lydus' ignorance and arrogance cause him to mislead Mnesilochus into mistrusting his friend Pistoclerus and ruining Chrysalus' first plot to get money. Chrysalus, who is

Lydus' opposite – in a part which could have been doubled to ironic comic effect – is knowing and scheming and devoted to his young master. Chrysalus is charmingly self-conscious and self-congratulatory even on the edge of the precipice:

> Huic hominem decet auro expendi, huic decet statuam statui ex auro.(640-41)
>
> This man ought to be estimated as golden, there ought to be a statue sculpted to him in gold.

Thus Chrysalus proclaims his estimate of his own worth when he has provided funds for his young master to buy the courtesan who has been promised to the soldier. Chrysalus is unaware that his young master in a fit of jealously has turned over all the money to his father. With the faith of all young lovers Mnesilochus immediately commands Chrysalus to come up with another scheme. Chrysalus does. Chrysalus pretends to be completely in his old master's control, has himself tied up and then relies on the threats of the rival, the bragging soldier, to frighten the old man into paying for the girl. The soldier meets only Chrysalus and the old man on stage. Chrysalus carefully directs his two characters, creating for each a different reality. Nicobolus thinks that the courtesan is the soldier's wife and that his son is in danger. Cleomachus is told that Mnesilochus is out of town. As he negotiates the deal, the slave creates the circumstances in which the soldier and the old man unwittingly find themselves. Plautus accentuates the fact that Chrysalus is the real campaigner by giving him many military speeches, including the notable

fifty line comparison of himself to Agamemnon and Ulysses which immediately follows his conquest of the soldier and the old man (925-73).

Epidicus, like Palaestrio, has been busy before the play begins. In response to letters from his absent young master he has inveigled his old master into buying his son's courtesan on the understanding that the girl is the old man's daughter. When Stratippocles comes home he has forgotten his earlier love and has brought another girl with him. He wants Epidicus immediately to find the money owing on her. It is at this moment that Epidicus remembers a soldier willing to buy the first girl. The slave encourages and warns himself and begins his directing by telling the young master not to wander about the streets where his father can see him (161-65). Epidicus then indirectly directs the old man to give him enough money to buy the new girl by assuring the old man that he can resell her at once to the soldier who will take her quickly out of their lives. With the money safely in hand Epidicus rents a substitute and sends her to the old man. Thus when the soldier arrives at Periphanes' house both the old and the young bragging soldiers are surprised by the situation which the slave has arranged. Periphanes is the only character to be on stage with the soldier and yet both men are directed by Epidicus. Epidicus has yet to play in another plot but his use or abuse of the soldier is at an end.

Milphio, the slave in *Poenulus*, is not at all sympathetic or complimentary to his young master or to the young man's courtesan and yet, after a long opening

delay, Milphio gives Agorastocles a plan to punish the pimp. The plan is described in less than four lines and Milphio's part in its execution is to train the bailiff, Collybiscus, to look like a foreigner so that he can gain entrance to the pimp's house. Milphio is not a cheerful, take-charge servant. He complains that "it is a misfortune to serve a lover" (*seruire amanti miseria est.*820). Milphio is joined in complaint by the pimp's slave who lets slip the fact that Anterastilis and Adelphasium are freeborn Carthaginians. Milphio is not, however, without the urge to direct or to delight in deceit. It is Milphio who begs Hanno's help in damaging the pimp and directs the Carthaginian to pretend to be the father of the courtesans. Milphio is amazed at how well Hanno plays the part:

> eu hercle mortalem catum,
> malum crudumque et callidum et subdolum!...
> me quoque dolis iam superat architectonem. (1108-10)
>
> Hercules! He's an intelligent chap, unfeeling and crooked, clever and deceitful...
> he beats even me the arch-architect at deceit.

In other words, Milphio attributes to anyone whom he thinks can dissemble the attributes of a slave. Milphio, in this case, has outsmarted himself because Hanno does not need to act; he is the father and the family is soon embracing. Plautus, clearly, agrees with Milphio that slaves are recognizable by their ability to dissemble. The resulting happy situation is the one which Antamoenides, the soldier, interrupts. The slave is not likely present when Anatmoenides appears but he has set the stage for the soldier's disappointment and the pimp's discomfiture.

Pseudolus opens with Calidorus reading his courtesan's letter and begging the slave Pseudolus to get the required money to prevent her being purchased by Polymachaero-plagides. Pseudolus is not sure what plan he will use but for twenty lines he loftily plans a military campaign, swearing by Jupiter and talking of his troops and legions (575-95). His military desires are immediately blessed by the arrival of the soldier's deputy. The slave at once scouts the enemy and gains enough ammunition to lay seige to the pimp and release the tearful Phoenicium. Thus, when Harpax reappears and meets the pimp and the old man, all three are dismayed to find that the courtesan has aleady been delivered to her lover. The pimp and the old man abuse poor Harpax because they suspect him of being Pseudolus' deputy. Eventually Harpax gets his money while Ballio and Simo must pay the wagers they have made against Pseudolus' achieving his objective. The pimp and the old man are more abusive to Harpax than they would have been to the warrior but the defeat and its arrangement by the slave are familiar from the other soldier plays.

In five of the eight plays which have soldiers as important elements of a plot the slave is the character most reponsible for the soldier's defeat. Whether the slave deals directly with the soldier as he does in *Bacchides* and *Miles Gloriosus*, or directs scenes in which the soldier is discomfitted, the slave routs his opponent. In *Curculio* the lover's parasite takes over the role of planner and director. In the two other plays *Truculentus* and *Eunuchus* the soldiers meet with and are

(temporarily) beaten in small skirmishes by Cyamus the cook and Parmeno respectively. However, I have suggested that in these plays, the courtesans take on the deceitful, self-conscious, and directorial aspects of the slave to control the soldiers to their advantage. Phronesium will allow Cyamus to make Stratophanes jealous but not to drive him away. Parmeno, because he acts on behalf of Chaerea rather than the lover, suggests the plan which leads to the rape of Pamphila and, therefore, certainly complicates Thaïs' plans. Thaïs' declaration of love for Phaedria at the beginning of the play frees Parmeno for these other activities and allows him the time to defeat the soldierly part of Thaïs' character because he does not need to rescue her from the real bragging soldier.

The clever slave has already been discussed expertly in various works; outlining all of the relationships between this kind of slave and the other elements of Roman Comedy would be a large and demanding task not suitable in the context of this present work.[6] However, in view of the evidence cited above, there are several conclusions to be drawn from the slave's relationship with the bragging soldier.

The soldier is a creation of illusion; the slave creates illusion. The slave, or a character with his characteristics, is always sent to do battle with the bragging

---

[6] George Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton University Press, 1952), 249-253 & passim. Duckworth notes that only eight of Plautus' plays have intriguing slaves; among these he lists *Bacchides*, *Epidicus*, *Miles*, *Poenulus*, and *Pseudolus*. It is interesting that these are also plays with bragging soldiers and that these two characters most often appear in concert.

soldier. The young lovers and the victim-courtesans usually avoid the soldier's presence, sometimes completely. The slaves meet him or create ambushes. While the slaves are not often totally responsible for the happy endings, their ability to plan, deceive, and direct leads to victory in the part of the plot which involves the soldier. It is important to distinguish between the play as a whole and the part of the plot which involves the bragging soldier.

In the theatre the slave's illusion also works on the audience. Along with Periplectomenus the audience forgets that other characters have invented and deceived; the audience too declares Palaestrio to be an arch-architect. The audience in comedy becomes so rapt in watching a slave -as Tranio in *Mostellaria* puts it-

> pergunt turbare usque ut ne quid possit conquiescere, (1053)
>
> go on stirring so that it's not possible for anything to settle,

that it forgets to see what the slave actually accomplishes. The reader studying the text without theatrical distractions and with the leisure to reread is aware that the slave rarely accomplishes much beyond his own aggrandizement and occasional freedom. In *Bacchides* the soldier is bought off, but the furious fathers must be seduced into accepting their sons' courtesans, a task which the women could have accomplished at the beginning of the play if an audience had not needed entertaining. At the end of *Curculio* Planesium recognizes Therapontigonus' ring and declares him to be her brother in a recognition scene which was bound to

occur as soon as the two of them met, with or without the parasite's meddling. In *Epidicus* Philippa turns up to find her daughter and make much of Epidicus' effort useless; Hanno performs the same function for Milphio in *Poenulus*. If Philocomasium were really a citizen Palaestrio hardly needed such complicated methods to free her; in addition, Palaestrio has a great deal of help. Pseudolus alone, dealing with Harpax, the deputy, is responsible for the happy outcome of a play and he has the unwitting aid of Simo the old man who wagers that he won't be swindled and thus provides much needed funding. Pseudolus also has the unusual luxury of being able to borrow twenty silver minae from the young lover's friend and is given the services of Simia, an even trickier slave than himself, to act the part of Harpax. Thus the slave can control the soldier and the pimp but is not necessarily instrumental in achieving happiness for the courtesans, their lovers, or their relatives.

SUMMARY

A brief summary of the information which has been presented to illustrate the characters of Roman Comedy as they relate to the bragging soldier may provide a helpful guide to recognizing these same characters as they appear in other times and other disguises.

In plays where there is a bragging soldier a parasite can be expected to flatter, enlarge and use his host. The parasite's main interest is food. He is already free

but prefers dependence. He does not ask shelter, clothing, or money from the soldier: just food and lots of it. Parasites are also capable of directing the soldier's actions. In this the parasite demonstrates some of the qualities of a clever slave. The similarities of behaviour of the parasite and the slave (and the independent courtesan) would provide an interesting area for further study.

The young lovers want the soldiers' women. They do not often interact or even meet with soldiers and, when they do, the actions of others may already have settled any differences which the rivals have. Lovers are aware of their rivals and love regardless of obstacles or of flaws in the women. Despite their frequent lack of plans, resources, nerve or self-consciousness and despite formidable foes, the lovers always win, always get the women. Something in the simple polarity, the rivalry of lover and soldier for the female object, suggests that these three characters were the basic blocks of comedy to which other elements were added.

The women are of two kinds. One group are victims or objects, ignorant of or fearing the soldier and rescued by the lover and his friends. The other women are like warriors in their enjoyment of flattery, respect for money and sense of importance. The second group of women have a slave's ability to plan, direct and control soldiers; but they also have the parasite's ability to flatter, when necessary, and they are willing to become dependent in return for protection.

The slaves dominate the audience and the other characters with words and wit. The slaves create plans or illusions, consider themselves part of a play, direct

the others in the play and organize and appropriate the actions of others. They help the young lovers to gain their desires, and, in the plays where there are bragging soldiers, the slaves control the soldiers.

The braggart warrior is much more than the sum of his lines, exaggerated and humorous as these may be. Usually the soldier is on stage for very short periods, and his language while he is on stage must compensate for the limited scope of his role. His emotions and their results are inflated, and repetitive, and fantastic, but always verbal, not actual. The language used about the soldier reflects the desires of those who fear him or those who want something from him. The soldier, it must be remembered, also reflects the desires of the playwrights, actors and, above all, the audience. Their projections of their fears are often more inflated than any idea the soldier has about himself. The soldier and those around him call attention to his language and, therefore, call attention to his being a creation of much language. He is often an element of suspense in the play, described and feared before he appears. Those who do not fear him sometimes mimic him and exaggerate his role while calling attention to his impotence. The figure of authority, hugely magnified in its stupidity and arrogance, obviously incapable but oblivious to its incapacity is impossible to resist. Anticipation, mockery, and flattery, the language others use about the soldier, these create a far greater

character than the one which walks the stage and in this contrast lies the comic essence of the role.

The soldier does not construct plots and shows little awareness of the plots of others even when he is caught up in them. The soldier is always in pursuit of the woman but rarely aware of his rival, the young lover. He is always dominated by the slave or someone who, like the slave, can plan, direct and be self-conscious. The soldier is never self-conscious. He may, like Stratophanes, be aware that soldiers brag but he is not aware of his own bragging. When Palaestrio urges disdain on Pyrgopolynices it is difficult to know how much of the soldier's reaction to the flattery is feigned and how much is belief, for he gives none of the clear indications of acting which his enemies give as they reassure themselves of the qualities of their contributions to the plot (*Miles* at line 1066 or 1073 for example). The soldier rarely makes the wildest claims about his appearance, or about his ability afield or abed, but he gives assent to the claims made for him. He accepts the language which creates him. His crime is not one of commission but one of omission. He is the creation of language, a reflection and, therefore, he is able to accomplish nothing. His reflected power is always frustrated. He does not get the woman. He begets no children, figurative or real, legitimate or illegitimate. Even the baby which Philocomesium pretends is Stratophanes' son turns out to be a byblow of the young lover. The braggart warrior is, above all and despite all the words and time devoted to advertising his powers, impotent.

Chapter II

SERVANTS WHO SERVE THE WRONG MASTERS

Where does the bragging soldier go when he strides off the Roman stage for the last time, or when there are no longer any Roman stages? Does his tunic wait in moth balls for the Renaissance? His reappearance in deliberate neo-classical echoes (such as *Ralph Roister Doister*) and his development into complex characters in Shakespeare (such as Falstaff with a prince whom he tries to make his parasite, or as Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch who share the work of soldier and parasite) these may be a renaissance, a result of rediscovery and study of Latin texts, though in the case of Falstaff and Aguecheek the complexity suggests multiple influences. However, I would argue that villains like Richard III are the ancient soldier's distant cousins too and that the complex and compelling traits of these evil characters are the result of their forced marches in bad company through the sacred and profane theatres of the Middle Ages. The relationship of such figures as Iago and Richard III to the Vice of the medieval morality plays is argued convincingly by Bernard Spivack in *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil:*

The History of a Metaphor in Relation to His Major Villains.[1] The ancestors of the medieval vice figures prove more problematic for Spivack although he notes, as I have suggested above, that later moralities give rise to vice figures who are "also, on occasion, assimilated to type figures out of Latin comedy, the parasite and the *miles gloriosus.*"[2] It is not an area which he chooses to explore and he does not consider Hrotsvitha or any other materials from intervening years as illustrations of how such a transition might have occured.

Hrotsvitha's works provide a clear view of bragging soldiers who look suspiciously like those of Plautus and Terence. At the same time her works demonstrate what happens in dramatic (or quasi-dramatic) texts when these soldiers go forth to war with heroes and heroines wearing the armour of Christ, and that demonstration makes the genesis of devils and raging Herods, as they appear in medieval drama, more certain.

The most popular and influential battles between bragging soldiers and Christian heroes, those which audiences in England, from before Chaucer to after Shakespeare, enjoyed, occurred in the Mystery cycles and the Morality plays. Charlotte Spivack, in *The Comedy of Evil on Shakespeare's Stage*[3] provides a

---

[1] For a comprehensive discussion of the develpment of vices and the Vice figure from the Psychomachia of Prudentius through the Pater Noster plays and the moralities to the Tudor stage and Shakespeare see Bernard Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press 1958).

[2] B. Spivack, *Allegory of Evil*, 311.

[3] C. Spivack, *The Comedy of Evil on Shakespeare's Stage*.

clear definition, description, and development guide to the Vice's progress through the Morality plays. As a complement and a contrast to that study, in the third chapter of this thesis I will examine the bragging soldier of the Mystery Cycles and draw conclusions at that time about the bragging soldier's appearance in Biblical situations as opposed to his appearance in the Moralities.

First, however, there is, as I have suggested, earlier evidence to suggest a connection between bragging soldiers and Vice figures, evidence of what happens to classical figures in a Christian context: a direct link between the comedy of Terence and six dramatic works written in the tenth century. The dramas of Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim illustrate clearly what happens when the ancient bragging soldier meets Christians without the mediating influence of Humanism, and before the long tradition of Mystery Cycles and Morality plays rings its own changes on the basic dramatic stereotypes.

The centuries between the end of organized Roman dramatic production and the beginnings of liturgical drama were long considered to be without theatrical presentations.[4] Nonetheless, sometime between 950 and 973 a woman, living in a

---

[4] George R. Coffman in his "A new Approach to Medieval Latin Drama," *Modern Philology*, xxii #3 (Feb. 1925):262 is fairly typical in insisting that "It is contrary to all evidence to hold that Hrotvitha's dialogues were acted," despite his conviction that Hrotsvitha's plays are "akin to the miracle play." He does allow that since Terence was recited in monastic schools it is consistent "to suppose that these also were recited before various neighbouring audiences." This is an opinion with which Peter Dronke concurs in the case of Hrotsvitha. See *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*. (Cambridge University Press, 1994), xx.

religious foundation in Gandersheim, in Saxony wrote six works which, whether they were acted or dramatically read have many earmarks of what we would call plays. The existence in these tenth century works of soldiers, parasites, lovers, slaves and courtesans, or of roles with associations and characteristics in many ways similar to those of the soldiers, parasites, lovers, slaves and courtesans discussed in Chapter I, suggests that certain character types survived in folk tradition, or survived in literature, or were recreated in dramatic form, long before they appeared in Mystery, Miracle or Morality plays. For this reason it is worthwhile to examine Hrotsvitha's dramatic works in some detail, not for their sources, or their dramatic qualities, nor for their literary merit, though all of these things are worthy of examination. This study will concentrate on examining the ways in which Hrotsvitha's characters echo the characters of Roman comedy and the ways in which, by the tenth century, their Christian context has changed them.

In the traditional history of Western drama, Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim is often a footnote. Her six plays are considered unrelated to the mainstream of dramatic development, although most intellectual historians of the period feel obliged to mention her, if only because, being ostensibly based on the Latin comedies of Terence and being written in an age supposedly without theatre, such work must be explained away. In his Introduction to *English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes*, A. W. Pollard says that "somewhat undue importance is generally attributed to the plays" of Hrotsvitha. He repeats a charge of

"supersensuous modesty," a charge which is as difficult to refute as it is difficult to comprehend, levelled at Hrotsvitha in 1880; he then swings between an acknowledgment that some of the lines in Hrotsvitha clearly point to performance, and a discussion of the difficulties of acting some of the incidents which he thinks could scarcely have been represented with modesty. (I find it difficult to imagine tenth century Saxons, those having taken certain vows or not, worrying overmuch about 'modesty' even if it is the 'supersensuous' kind.) Pollard's discussion of Hrotsvitha's plays focuses attention on a farcical scene in which a man makes love to pots and pans. With this treatment, and by concluding that there is no reason to suppose that "the half dozen plays of the literary nun, whether acted or not...exercised the smallest influence on the history of the drama," Pollard manages to avoid serious consideration of Hrotsvitha's plays in a way fairly typical of much scholarship on Medieval Drama in the first two thirds of this century.[5]

However, Pollard misses an important point. To dismiss six plays written in the last half of the tenth century is to dismiss important evidence. There is, after all, little indication that any single trope or liturgical drama or cycle play exercised

---

[5] A.W. Pollard, *English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), xii, xiii. There have been notable exceptions to this attitude, particularly early in the century and again in recent years, when feminism has made respectable the serious examination of women's texts which do not conform to expectations. Peter Dronke, especially in *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1984) provides excellent insights and on p. 327 a bibliography to major works. Katharina M. Wilson in *The Dramas of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim* (Muenster, Saskatchewan: St. Peter's Press, 1985) provides an extensive bibliography:136-145.

the smallest influence on the history of the drama; each of the examples which remains is of interest simply because it is evidence of the existence of certain kinds of drama at some time or place.[6] Such dramas plot a direction, a series of individual experiments and changes, some of them perhaps more influential than others, but at this remove it is hard to tell which were most influential. So much material is missing that we may never see the influential plays. What we know is that there was influence and change. Thus, regardless of whether Hrotsvitha expected that her dramatic works would be acted or read, regardless of whether they were acted or read after her death and were an influence on the beginnings of Renaissance Drama, these six plays capture for us an important moment in the development of the themes and characters of that drama in its post-classical phase. Here is evidence of the progress of dramatic stereotypes from classical values to Christian ones.

At first blush Hrotsvitha's plays would not appear to provide fertile ground for the feet of the blustering comic soldier. Legends of saints and martyrs, the Bible, the liturgy, and Boethius are the sources of much of Hrotsvitha's material.

---

[6] Ironically enough Hrotsvitha's work may have influenced comedy at a later date. Marvin Herrick in *Tragicomedy, its origin and development in Italy,* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1962) notes that the vogue for 'Christian Terence' began in 1501 with the publication of Hrotsvitha's "plays"; and "by 1530 the technique of the Terentian sacred drama was well established" (17).

Yet she says in the preface to her plays that classical comedy is the source of both the matter and the style of these works:

> Plures inveniuntur catholici, cuius nos penitus expurgare nequimus facti, qui pro cultioris facundia sermonis gentilium vanitatem librorum utilitati praeferunt sacrarum scripturarum. Sunt etiam alii, sacris inhaerentes paginis, qui licet alia gentilium spernant, Terentii tamen fingmenta frequentius lectitant et, dum dulcedine sermonis delectantur, nefandarum notitia rerum maculantur. Unde ego, Claor Validus Gandeshemensis, non recusavi illum imitari dictando, dum alii colunt legendo, quo eodem dictationis genere, quo turpia lascivarum incesta feminarum recitabantur, laudabilis sacrarum castimonia virginum iuxta mei facultatem ingenioli celebraretur.(p.235, l. 1-3)
>
> Many Catholics are found, who by virtue of the eloquence of their more cultivated expression, prefer the mere show of the heathen books to the usefulness of Holy Scriptures and we cannot completely excuse ourselves of this. There are others also clinging to holy writing, who although they reject other works of the heathens, nevertheless often reread the inventions of Terence, and, while charmed by the pleasures of the expression, are harmed by acquaintance with sinful matters. Therefore I, the proclaiming voice of Gandersheim, have not refused to imitate him when writing, whom others cultivate when reading, in order that the praiseworthy purity of holy women be celebrated according to the extent of my modest ability in the self-same style of composition which has been used to describe the shameless nastiness of lewd women.[7]

Thus, although we do not know precisely the influence which Hrotsvitha had on those who followed her, she represents, preserved in amber, her idea of "the self-same style of composition" [*dictationis genere*] and of the elements which make

---

[7] H. Homeyer, *Hrotsvithae Opera* (Munchen: Verlag Ferdinand Schoningh, 1970), 233. All references to Hrotsvitha's works are translated from this edition of the text. I have translated quite literally and with very little felicity because the nuances of the Latin would otherwise have necessitated a much freer expression.

up that "style" in a time and place soon to stir with dramatic activity.[8] Among those elements are characters who in a surprising number of ways resemble the bragging soldier and his associates.

We do know from Hrotsvitha's preface precisely the source of her inspiration, or what she claims as her source: Terence. Both the elements of Terence which she leaves unchanged and the elements which she changes are of interest to the present argument as indicating either Hrotsvitha's idea of representations suitable for her time and place, or developments generally in the literature of her time. Hrotsvitha clearly states what she believes to be her relationship to Terence. There is pleasure in reading his manner of expression but danger in the matter which he describes. Hrotsvitha's purpose is to rescue that matter: the "lewd women" of classical drama and those who prey upon them. She wishes thereby to redeem both the gender and the style from its prostitution. Using Terence's elegant style Hrotsvitha will delight her audience with the actions of "holy women." She will show her audience penitent courtesans and steadfast virgins. Listeners will see quite clearly how Terence's women should have behaved.

---

[8] G.R. Coffman, "A New Approach to Medieval Latin Drama," *Modern Philology*, xxii #3 (University of Chicago Press, Feb. 1925), 256. Coffman points out interesting connections between the religious houses of southern German and the discovery of texts of plays written early in the medieval period. A study of the MS tradition of Hrotsvitha's works such as that provided in A.L. Haight, *Hroswitha of Gandersheim: Her Life, Times and Works* (New York: The Hroswitha Club, 1965) reveals that at least one of the plays,"Gallicanus" appears in another medieval collection and suggests that some scribes and librarians, if no one else, were familiar with the plays in the centuries following Hrotsvitha's death.

At the end of the preface noted above, Hrotsvitha suggests that the genre of these works too will be influenced by Terence:

> in aliis meae inscientiae opusculis heroico ligatam strophio, in hoc dramatica vinctam serio colo, perniciosas gentilium delicias abstinendo divito. (p.234, l. 9)
>
> In the other little works of my inexperience [her eight narrative poems] I cultivated things bundled into heroic strophes; in this drama I cultivate things strung out in a row; I avoid, by abstaining, the dangerous pleasures of the heathens.

This gardening metaphor contrasts the grouping of poetic lines with a serial presentation. Hrotsvitha says that she is changing both her earlier high style and her earlier epic form for a form which is, by implication, plainer. In order to avoid "the dangerous pleasures" of the heathen poet, her chastening of Terence will cast him in the humble lines of dialogue or folk-drama. Hrotsvitha makes a distinction not only on the grounds of style, (ie. between kinds of verse), but on the basis of genre, (ie.a series of incidents [*dramatica serie*] instead of a poetic whole [*heroico strophio*]). By doing this Hrotsvitha creates an interesting problem for herself: on the one hand she wishes to use the "self-same style of composition" because of the "pleasures of the expression" but on the other hand she proposes to use a form which avoids "dangerous pleasures." In fact, Hrotsvitha does use verse forms, though they are varied and interspersed with prose. Perhaps, as Peter Dronke suggests in *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*, Hrotsvitha's preface is a sophisticated apology, begging forgiveness rather than permission for her use of a

secular model: a preface which allows her to do what she claims she is not doing. Having pointed out the dangers of reading the Roman drama Hrotsvitha proceeds to use it as a source not only of style but of matter.[9]

Hrotsvitha's choice of dialogue is as important for the ways in which it makes her create relationships between characters as for its appearance in an age which is supposed to be ignorant of drama as a genre. Hrotsvitha discovers for herself the possibilities created by having one character comment upon another, and the necessity of revealing relationships between characters by having them address each other in distinctive ways.[10] She goes beyond the presentation of abstract philosophical dialogues. She writes both historical and allegorical works, works about saints and martyrs; thus she could be said to be the writer of prototypes for both Miracle and Morality plays. At the same time, she creates characters who are more than names such as Love, Peace, or Purity would indicate. Wisdom and her daughters, Faith, Hope and Love, comment on their own wisdom and holiness but they are also described by the military authorities to whom they are a nuisance. It is not wise to believe that only a modern audience is capable of seeing that there is some truth in both of these points of view. Hrotsvitha creates persons who

---

[9] Peter Dronke, *Women Writers ofthe Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1984),69-73.

[10] In the narratives which describe the struggles between saints and tyrants the presence of a narrator on the side of the saint scews the power relationship. There is no ambiguity about the outcome, and without dialogue the reader has no chance to identify, even briefly with the evil characters. Dialogue provides an essential element for the development of the comedy of evil.

function on the literal as well as the allegorical and anagogical level. In addition she creates, to people her plays in company with the allegorical persons, soldiers and prostitutes, friends and advisors who speak and behave in ways not unfamiliar from Latin comedy. If her reading of Terence is her only experience of dramatic writing her creation is the more remarkable.

*

The summary of the action which Hrotsvitha provides for the first of her plays begins with the words, "The Conversion of Gallicanus the Leader of Soldiers" (*CONVERSIO GALLICANI PRINCIPIS MILITIAE*). The play is generally referred to as *Gallicanus*, although the characters central to both parts of the play are two saints, John and Paul, Christian advisers to the Emperor Constantine. The play begins with the Emperor Constantine asking his general, Gallicanus, to lead a campaign against the Scythians. As a reward for his efforts, the general requests the Emperor's daughter in marriage. Unfortunately, for both Gallicanus and Constantine, the woman in question is a virgin and promised to God. The first half of the play deals with Gallicanus' conquest of the Scythians and then with his conversion to Christianity by Constantine's chaplains, John and Paul. The second half of the play occurs some years later, in the time of Julian the Apostate. Gallicanus, John and Paul are martyred. The events with which Hrotsvitha deals in

this play are a far cry from Roman comedy. Yet certain characters are not so far removed from their ancient relatives as might be expected. Some of these have characteristics in common with the bragging soldier, and those who interact with the soldier-like characters have relationships not unlike the relationships discussed in the previous chapter.

Several characters in *Gallicanus* might be expected to conform to the type of the bragging soldier; among them are emperors, a king, a general, soldiers and enemy forces. Of course not every character who is a soldier is a "bragging soldier." Roman comedy makes a distinction between the true soldier, who is not intrinsically comic, and the bragging soldier, who is. For example, in Plautus' *Amphitruo* it is clear that Amphitruo is a warrior no matter what games Jupiter may play on him. Amphitruo may be the butt of Jupiter's joke but the difference in their power makes Amphitruo more pathetic than comic. Jupiter might have been a better candidate for bragging soldier; however, he lacks two major conditions for the designation: he is only too aware of his rival and his rival's prior claim and, what is more, his attractiveness, and potency are without question, which gives some idea of the way in which a god may skew the dynamic balance of a plot. No wonder that, as Mercury explains in his opening remarks, gods were not supposed to appear as characters in comedy. On a more mundane level, young lovers like Pistoclerus in *Bacchides* and Stratippocles in *Epidicus* perform military service and are, therefore, in a literal sense, soldiers but they do not play the role of

bragging soldier. Thus, mere military associations do not assure that a character will conform to the type either in Roman comedy or, presumably, in Hrotsvitha.

If he is to be classified as a bragging soldier, the character may be expected to be a rival for the affections of a woman; however, although he will be desirous of her affection, or at least wish to possess her, he will rarely be aware of his rival lover. He will still appear to be a very important figure, one who invites mockery by his self-importance, one who is created in large part by those around him: to be a reflection of their needs or fears. He will have a narrow range of emotions usually limited to anger but may express an interest in food. He will usually have money. He will show little awareness of himself or his part in the plot. He will be dominated by a slave, usually the rival's slave. He will in the final analysis be impotent. If there is any continuation of the tradition from Roman comedy into Hrotsvitha's work some, at least, of these characteristics should be expected to occur together if a character is to be identified as a bragging soldier.

In Part I of *Gallicanus* there are two armies. The enemy troops are Scythians, and in Scene ix they contend with a force of Roman tribunes. The function of both of these groups in the play is to narrate the events of battle as first one force and then the other prevails. Hrotsvitha has created appearances for the soldiers in these armies primarily to provide dialogue rather than monologue when her generals inform the audience of the events of battle. There are also, in Part I, characters who are designated *milites* in the text, but all are mere functionaries,

acting as heralds announcing persons entering the Emperor's presence, and giving information about actions occurring off-stage. None of these possesses attributes which would make him a candidate for the role of bragging soldier.

However, in the first half of the play, Bradan King of the Scythians, leader of the forces fighting the Romans, has four characteristics in common with a classical bragging soldier. Faced with a superior force, he has no strength or ability to plan or direct his army. He expresses this impotence as a loss of language: "I don't know what to say"(*Quid dicam, ignoro,* I,ix,2). Then he chooses to surrender rather than fight to the death. Finally, when Bradan loses, he demonstrates the soldier's mercenary connections; he is willing to pay as many hostages and as much tribute as Gallicanus demands (I,ix,3). Bradan's brief (three-speech) appearance does not allow much development of his character but it is noteworthy that speechlessness and an offer to pay when defeated are the elements which Hrotsvitha chooses to use to create a succinct account of the Scythian's defeat. Whether she copied her source or not, here is evidence in the tenth century that she clearly considered these attributes, attributes of the bragging soldier, still evocative of the character of a losing general. When one considers the range of possible behaviour open to such a character in life, rather than in literature, Hrotsvitha's choices suggest the application, conscious or not, of a stereotype.

The Emperor Constantine has a larger part than the defeated Bradan. Hrotsvitha was accustomed to Emperors who directed troops in battle. The

connections between the court of the earliest Holy Roman Emperors and the convent at Gandersheim were numerous. Sophia, the daughter of Otto II and his Byzantine wife Theophano, attended the convent. The abbess, when Hrotsvitha was writing her plays, was Gerberga, niece of Otto I; Hrotsvitha later wrote a history of Otto I. Hrotsvitha could not but know that Otto I, like Constantine, had fought at least one historically and religiously decisive battle.[11] Constantine's functions in the plot, however, are not military. In "Gallicanus," Constantine instigates the action and then receives reports on that action which allow the audience to hear about events taking place off stage.

Constantine's general, however, is a more promising candidate. Constantine's praise of Gallicanus is in large part responsible for our opinion of Gallicanus as a soldier. In the first speech in the play Constantine, despite complaining of Gallicanus' reluctance to fight, calls attention to the soldier's strength and says that Gallicanus has been chosen because he is not unacquainted with serving in the defence of his country (I,i,1). Later, when hearing of Gallicanus' defeat in the opening stages of his battle against Bradan, Constantine comments:

Quantis tunc angustiis urgebatur constantia tui pectoris! (I, xii,5)

With how much trouble the steadfastness of your courage has burdened you.

---

[11] Otto I on August 10, 955 defeated the Magyars at Lechfeld.

Thus, Constantine is used to suggest Gallicanus' great reputation. The Emperor's expectations of Gallicanus are in direct contrast to the latter's reluctance to go to war and his near defeat in the actual battle.

Constantine is Constantia's father; however, rather than being a loving father, Constantine, like the pimps in classical comedy, acts as an owner not a protector of the woman. She is the reward which Gallicanus demands in return for his action. Like her courtesan predecessors, she is, as might be expected, already promised to another. Constantia reminds her father that it was with his permission that she devoted her virginity to God (I,ii,3). Her father is willing to ignore her wishes for his own policy. The scene between Constantia and her father is reminiscent of Act I, Scene i in Plautus' *Persa* in which Saturio, the parasite, pretends to sell his daughter in order to trap the pimp, Dordalus. In *Persa,* also, the daughter lectures her father on morality, and in that scene also some characters and the audience know more about the plot than the woman, who is only partly informed but is not expected to refuse. In Hrotsvitha, we have a clear picture of what happens in Christian drama. The stereotypes continue but their relationships change: it is not the stereotype of the old man, with its implications of the 'old Adam,' or the old religion, but the woman, the virgin, the redeemed woman, who takes charge of events.

Constantine does not present a very commanding figure; he is less a soldier than a parasite or pimp who will sell his daughter to maintain his comfort. He is

manipulated by both his daughter and his general, getting what he wants by saying, "Yes," to everyone. Constantine is enormously relieved when Gallicanus becomes Christian and no longer requires either flattery, or Constantia's body.

Gallicanus on the other hand is commanding, commander and commanded. He is called a leader of soldiers. In the first scene Constantine praises him to his face. In the second scene Constantine, describing Gallicanus to Constantia, calls Gallicanus a

> ...dux, cui frequens succuessus triumphorum primum inter principes dignitati adquisivit...(I,ii,2)
>
> ...commander whose frequent triumphant advances have gained him the rank of first among princes....

Gallicanus is not shy about his own abilities. In the opening scene of the play he replies to Constantine's request that he take the field against the Scythians by assuring the Emperor that,

> obnixe manibus pedibusque semper insistens obsequeiis, tuae augustalis excellentiae votis effectu conabar respondere. (I,i,2)
>
> resolutely, hand and foot, always pursuing obedience I strove by performance to answer [ie. to live up to my] pledge to your most august excellence.

A few speeches later, Gallicanus says of his efforts:

> Sed summa inplendae intentio servitutis summam expetit recompensationem
>
> mercedis. (I,i,4)

The greatest exertion to fulfill service hopes for the greatest payment of reward.

Indeed all of Gallicanus' first exchange with Constantine emphasizes the general's own service and expectation of reward, and emphasizes it in the repetitive, exaggerated manner we would expect of a bragging soldier. He is, after all, demanding the Emperor's daughter in return for his services. Later, in the midst of the battle against the Scythians, John makes a rhymed and balanced comment on the superiority of "anxious prayer" (*intenta precatio*) to "human expectations" (*humana praesumptio,* I,ix,4). Presumably this is a comment on Gallicanus' arrogance and ambition – his sinful pride – as well as being a suitable *sententia* for a play which was expected both by its writer and its audience to have improving qualities. It is also the sort of belittling remark that a slave of the true lover might make about the rival bragging soldier.

The true lover, the one who wins the woman, is, in each of Hrotsvitha's plays, God or His Son. Because Gallicanus is a suitor or lover of Constantia, a woman who has dedicated herself to chaste Christianity, Gallicanus' rival is the Christian God. Constantia implies as much in her prayer in Scene v when she asks that Gallicanus,

qui tui in me amorem surripiendo conatur extinguere, (I,v, 3)

who seeks to destroy the love in me for you,

be turned from his unlawful intention, from his lust. After his conversion Gallicanus himself orders that Constantia and his own daughters "continue in the love of God" (*perseverantes in dei amore)* to earn the "embrace of the eternal king" (*amplexibus regis aeterni,* I,xiii,1). Gallicanus is, in fact, given the woman only to find that he has, in a sense, won an empty victory in terms of this world's values. He explains to Constantine that he loves Constantia "more than fatherhood, more than life, more than the soul" (*prae parentibus, prae vita, prae anima,* I,xiii,4) and, therefore, must not see her often. Gallicanus has several of the attributes of the bragging soldier, attributes which he renounces when he becomes Christian.

Here, as in Roman comedy, the soldier is unaware of the plots around him and, during the course of the play, he is impotent both in battle and in bed. He accepts Constantine's praise at face value. He accepts the conditions attached to the woman, never dreaming that the conditions will lead to his losing her. He goes away and leaves the woman only to be denied her when he returns. He is unaware that he has a rival for the woman's affections. No one tells him that Constantia is promised to God, or that John and Paul have been sent not only to tell him about Constantia's habits but to convert him to Christianity and chastity. He is, as he explains to Constantine, completely ineffective in the battle against the Scythians except for the intervention of the friends of the true lover; moreover, he is denied both sex and reproduction by that same true lover. (Gallicanus has daughters, but

they are by a previous marriage and precede his rivalry with God.) Like Thraso in *Eunuchus*, Gallicanus eventually consents to support a ménage of numerous persons, headed by the true lover. When Gallicanus asks Constantine's permission to transfer his allegiance to a new master he provides for his daughters, frees his slaves, gives his money away, and begins a new relationship with God. At the same time he divests himself of the major possessions of a bragging soldier: his wealth or avarice, and his lust. In ceasing to be a rival he also ceases to be a bragging soldier.

In the second part of *Gallicanus*, as so often happens in Roman comedy also, the plans of the first part go awry and a whole new direction must be found. In Roman comedy the old man returns, or discovers he has been tricked, or the soldier finally arrives. In other words, the wishes of the true lover are thwarted once again.

In Part II of this play time has passed; Julian is Emperor; those whom "the bond of Christ's love joined" (*cum vinculum Christi amoris...coniungat,* I,xiii,4) in Part I have been separated; Constantine and Constantia are no longer alive although John and Paul still travel freely, distributing Constantia's treasure and serving their heavenly master (II,iv). Gallicanus' activities are reported, but he appears on stage only long enough to confirm his loyalty to Christ and to welcome martyrdom. If there is a bragging soldier in Part II, it is not Gallicanus.

The role of the characters actually designated as soldiers in the text of Part II changes slightly. They are extensions of Julian's will as well as reporters of off-stage activities. They carry out orders. They are ordered to seize Christians and remove their property. In their expedition against Gallicanus, they must report failure. They also report that John and Paul despise the new Emperor, Julian, and then these soldiers bring the two holy men on stage when the Emperor requires them. The mover behind these automata is Julian.

In Part II of *Gallicanus*, Julian the Apostate is Emperor and he announces that the trouble in his empire is caused by the laws regarding Christians, laws which were made in the time of Constantine. His punishment of the Christians is disproportionate, misdirected and generalized. In his first speech he denies the protections offered by Constantine's laws and orders his soldiers to dispossess all the Christians in his kingdom. Thus his actions, as the Christian writer creates and directs them, are remarkably like those of a bragging soldier. He suffers from the sins of anger, pride and avarice.

Julian is accompanied by Consuls who, like parasites, encourage the unsociable behaviour of their host. When Julian complains that Christians have too much freedom under the laws of Constantine, the Consuls tell him that it will be disgraceful if he continues to permit this. "That is appropriate," (*Decet.* II,i) they reply, when Julian then decides not to endure the Christians (II,i). Thus, the Consuls in parasitic fashion both direct Julian and then commend him for accepting

their direction. Julian's soldiers, unlike the dilatory Gallicanus of Part I, obey without comment the Emperor's command, a command which misapplies Christian teaching; they even comment on their obedience, "In us there will be no delay" (*In nobis non erit mora.* II,i,2).

Although Julian's own servants flatter him, John and Paul, the servants of Christ, with the confidence of the young lovers' slaves in Roman comedy, point out Julian's shortcomings: his greed and his failure to love God. In his opposition to the true lover and to John and Paul, the servants of God, Julian becomes a rival. In addition to the soldier's characteristic fury, enjoyment of flattery, and failure to acknowledge the claim of the true love, Julian is associated with wealth; he is portrayed as envious of the Christian's possessions. His actions are motivated by envy.

In his misuse of language Julian has more in common with classical slaves than with bragging soldiers, particularly those in plays in which the woman scarcely appears. Since there is no woman in this part of the play, this is understandable and tells something about the role of the woman in influencing the soldier's behaviour. The more power she has, the less he has. When she is absent he must stir about more to create plot tension. Julian quotes Luke 14:33 as an authority when he wishes to confiscate the personal possessions of the Christian community but in argument with the true servants, John and Paul, he is clearly the loser. His acceptance of flattery, his opposition to the true love, his blind

adherence to a goal and his inability to achieve it, as well as his association with parasites and wealth mark him as a true son of his classical ancestors. In their long confrontation with the Emperor, John and Paul call Julian the "devil's chaplain," (*diaboli capellanus,* II,v,4) though due to the ambiguity of the genitive it is unclear whether he gives advice to the devil, or from the devil. It may be that he does both, and that Hrotsvitha's ambiguity is intentional. Here, two centuries before he appears in medieval drama, is a clear connection of the bragging soldier with the devil whom he comes to serve so well in the medieval theatre. If John and Paul serve Christ, Julian and his functionaries serve a different master.

There are in *Gallicanus*, in addition to characters having some of the attributes of the classical bragging soldier, characters who relate to the soldier character in ways proper to classical slaves. The relationship of John and Paul to the true lover has already been suggested; they direct Gallicanus in his war with Bradan and on his return, but they have other behaviour in common with clever slaves. John and Paul are not plaster saints. In Part I they manipulate Gallicanus and rescue Constantia for Christ their master. They are also devious: when Gallicanus goes to pray at the Roman temple before battle, they stand aside. Then when he asks them why they did not accompany him they avoid the straightforward explanation that they are Christians; instead they claim that they were sending the luggage on ahead. In Part II John and Paul are argumentative, making clear to Julian that the emperors whom they previously served were strong

Christians and that they "rejoiced that they were servants of Christ" (*gloriabantur se servos esse Christi,* II,v,2). At the same time, John and Paul refuse to serve Julian, thus making it quite clear that their service is owed not to the Emperor but to the God whom he ought to worship.

The strong claim of a prior master is clear in Roman comedy. Particularly in *Captivi* and in *Miles Gloriosus*, where the new master has only recently obtained the slave. In such cases the slave argues that he must obey the prior claims of a dearer master. Undoubtedly in real life slaves who feel this way would be wise to keep their opinions to themselves, and content themselves with spitting in the master's wine, but in literature they may with some impunity express their feelings. Thus, John and Paul aid Gallicanus against Bradan, not because they serve Gallicanus or Constantia, but in order to gain the end of the master whom they do serve: to convert Gallicanus to Christianity. They tell Gallicanus what he must do and they insure that he does it – without attempting to enlighten him particularly. Although they do not have many lines, they clearly direct the action, and in the second part of the play they also comment upon their actions. John and Paul are on stage in only seven scenes of the twenty two, and speak only 18 lines of the total of 75 lines which Homeyer distinguishes in the play, but they speak half of the time when they are on stage. In matching wits with Julian and in their indifference to the bragging soldier's power, John and Paul are like their classical forebears who were willing to brazen it out with language no matter how dismal

the prospects. In the end they win freedom through martyrdom. Good Christian servants welcome their torments with the same fervour which classical servants devote to avoiding the mill and the whip. For Christian servants the torment serves to join them to their true master, setting them free to join a master who is beyond this life.

In *Gallicanus* there is another servant who, despite his brief appearance in the last four scenes of the play, provides a contrast with John and Paul and suggests the proper treatment of unfaithful servants. Terentianus does not speak during his first entrance in Part II, iv; he is given orders. Julian tells him to take charge of the secret execution of John and Paul. In Scene vii Terentianus makes clear his relationship to Julian when he announces that "the Emperor Julian, whom I serve, sends me to you" (*Imperator Iulianus, cui servio, misit vobis,* II,vii,1) to test the Christians with a gold statue of Jupiter. John both confirms this relationship and states the claim of his own master when he replies,

> Si Iulianus sit tuus domnus, habeto pacem cum illo et utere eius gratia; nobis non est alius nisi dominus Iesus Christus. (II,vii,1)
>
> If Julian is your master, keep peace with him and enjoy his friendship; for us there is no other master but Jesus Christ.

Terentianus, carrying out the instructions of Julian precisely and acting as a link with the functionaries, orders the execution of the two Christians and produces a lie to explain John's and Paul's disappearance: "Pretend" (*Simulate)*, he orders the soldiers when they ask what answers they are to give concerning the

disappearance of two well known Christians. Here the slave of the soldier takes on the efficiency and the devious behaviour expected of the true lover's slave in classical comedy. Julian is killed and Terentianus quickly discovers what happens to those who serve the wrong master in Christian drama: in Scene vii Terentianus' son is stricken with insanity. The Christians tell the terrified Terentianus that Julian, his master, has also been punished, having been destroyed by divine wrath. By admitting that it was at his order that his son, who was apparently among the soldiers, laid hands on the saints to kill them, Terentianus acknowledges his guilt and his role as link between Julian and the soldiers. Terentianus expresses his awareness that no enemy of the servants of God can escape unpunished. He repents and is baptized, thus saving his son.[12] Is it possible that Hrotsvitha chose this material as the substance for her first play, not only because it was a natural sequel to her poem on St. Agnes, who was Constantia's inspiration when making her vow of virginity, but because she enjoyed the parallel between the conversion

---

[11] As a guide to Hrotsvitha's sources I have used H. Homeyer, *Hrotsvithae Opera*. It is not within the scope of this work to compare Hrotsvitha's work with her sources, in part because these are by no means certain or, in the case of "Gallicanus," which was copied in the Alderspach Passionale, free from contamination. Julian the Apostate, whose conversion to Greek philosophy or religion was an obvious source of difficulty for Christians, was associated in legend with the devil. Constantine's daughter was really Constantina and she married Gallus, not Gallicanus, who was a completely different historical individual; however, this confusion was already extant in the seventh century, as Aldhelm's account in "De Virginitate" demonstrates. The entire story of Gallicanus and the martyrdom of John and Paul was reported to have been first written by the converted Christian, Terentianus. What is important here is that Hrotsvitha uses certain characters and relationships because she feels that they suit her purpose.

of a Terentian slave named Terentianus who served the rival Julian and her own conversion of Terence's dramas to the service of God?

**

The second play in Hrotsvitha's collection begins with the words, "The suffering of the Holy Virgins, Love, Purity, and Peace," (*PASSIO SANCTARUM VIRGINUM AGAPIS CHIONIAE ET HIRENAE*) but despite the importance of these martyrs, the play is usually titled *Dulcitius* after the ironically named Dulcitius, or 'Sweetie,' who is one of the male characters who torments the women.[13] In this play Love, Purity and Peace are wards of the Emperor, Diocletian. He praises their beauty and proposes to marry them to suitable nobles. Unwilling to endure the martyrdom of an unwanted marriage they choose a more visible martyrdom.

Diocletian is in the position of pimp or slave dealer; the Emperor refuses to recognize the claims of other lovers; like pimps in classical comedy the Emperor would rather destroy his property than allow it any free will. Ballio in *Pseudolus*, for example, threatens to send his courtesans to the brothel if they do not earn enough money by trapping rich lovers (*Ps* 210-229). When the women in *Dulcitius* declare their prior love for Christ, Diocletian sends them to be tortured

---

[13] While the presence of Gallicanus' name in the first line of the first play may be sufficient excuse for using his name as a title, it is less clear why Dulcitius' name should be used for the title of the second play. However, I shall follow common usage in this work.

in prison and examined by his lieutenant, Sweetie. Sweetie is smitten by the beauty of the women and expresses his lust for them. When he goes to visit or to violate them he is mysteriously enchanted and in his trance makes love to the pots and pans in an adjoining cupboard. Diocletian then appoints another lieutenant, Sissinius, to carry out his wishes. For refusing to submit to the Emperor's desires the women are threatened with public humiliation and tormented; Peace is, indeed, to be taken to a brothel; all are eventually martyred.

In this play too there are several candidates for the role of bragging soldier. If the Emperor does not qualify, who does? The soldiers designated as *milites* in the text play a larger part in this play than in *Gallicanus*, appearing in nine of fourteen scenes. As in *Gallicanus*, Hrotsvitha uses these soldiers to report events and to provide dialogue for Sweetie and Sisinius; however, in *Dulcitius* the soldiers also report on character. In Scene ii they obey Sweetie without question while doubting that he, or they, will be successful. They report that the women are faithful Christians, despising flattery and unaffected by threats of torture. In Scene iii the soldiers accompany Sweetie on his visit to the makeshift prison; they report to Sweetie that the women have been singing hymns; in Scene v, however, the soldiers no longer recognize their master; when he is covered with soot from the pots they puzzle over his identity and then decide that he is possessed by demons or is, perhaps, the devil himself. In scene viii Sweetie has fallen asleep and his soldiers are unable either to rouse their master or to carry out his orders to strip

the women and humiliate them. Lacking direction and power the soldiers report back to Diocletian. Evidently these soldiers are extensions of Sweetie's will and can function only while Sweetie remains conscious.

When Diocletian learns of Sweetie's failure he appoints Sisinnius to force the women to obey. The soldiers now serve Sisinnius. With this new lieutenant the soldiers are less conversational. They report on their own activities, bring other characters on stage or follow orders. They answer questions and are much aggrieved when, by following the orders of the two young strangers who rescue Peace, they find themselves in trouble with Sisinnius. The soldiers suggest their dependence on Sisinnius when they say to him in the final scene,

> Miris modis omnes illudimur...et si insanum caput diutius vivere sustines, te ipsum et nos perdes. (xiii,2)
>
> We are all ridiculed in wondrous ways...and if you allow the mad creature to live longer you will destroy yourself and us.

They apparently reflect the personality of whichever commander they serve. Servants of Lust may need to be aware of feelings; servants of violence or Anger need not.

These soldiers then are functionaries, not bragging soldiers or slaves. Indeed, these soldiers speak only to Sweetie and Sissinius, the lieutenants to the Emperor. They never speak directly to the women or to any other character in the play despite the fact that they are the characters who are commanded to deal with the women. We do not see them report Sweetie's failure to the Emperor. They say

that they will report and the Emperor says that he has received word of Sweetie's failure but the parties do not speak on stage. These *milites*, who do not plan or will action, except as commanded, are extensions of Sweetie and Sisinnius but have no independent being. Their commanders are more likely candidates for the role of bragging soldier.

Sweetie is a good candidate. In Scene ii Sweetie, whose name suggests his sensuous character, exclaims, "What beauty! what charm! what extraordinary little girls!"(*quam pulchrae, quam venustae, quam egregiae puellulae!* ii,1) He tells his companions that he is overcome by his lust: "I am bubbling over; they are drawn by love to me."(*Exaestuo illas ad mei amorem trahere.* ii,2) In this he displays the confidence of a Pyrgopolynices whose belief in his irresistibility remains unshaken despite his companion's doubts. Sweetie suggests flattery as a means of winning the women and, when his companions doubt that flattery will work, Sweetie threatens punishment and has the three women locked in the pantry. The scene in the pantry is not acted, but is reported by the women who, through a crack in the wall, observe Sweetie hugging and kissing the pots. The scene has been labeled a feminine touch or incongruous.[14] However, the connection of a soldier with food should come as no surprise to those of us who have noted the traditional closeness of soldier and parasite. It is not hard to imagine that as classical theatre declined

---

[14] This despite the fact that the pots also appear in Aldhelm's account of Dulcitius and the three virgins in "De Virginitate". See *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, ed. Rudolfus Ehwald (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961), vol.xv, 303-307.

into buffoonery, soldiers or their parasites made love to food. In Chapter I, I called attention to Antamoenides in *Poenulus* who becomes more interested in lunch than in the courtesan. The lusts for sex or for food are not always clearly differentiated in either ancient or medieval value systems. Certainly, in Roman theatre parasites, and sometimes their military friends also, would rather be fed than wed.

The sooty appearance of Sweetie after his fondling of the dirty pots causes both the women and his own men to think Sweetie is possessed by the devil. This is the second play in which Hrotsvitha connects the bragging soldier with the devil.[15] His lust is manifest; his sin is smeared all over his face and clothing. Sweetie covets the women for himself and does not carry out the orders of his superior. Blind to his duty as well as to decency he is also blind to both his moral and physical filth; his sin of lust is compounded by covetousness and leads to malfeasance. He is unaware of his participation in a plot over which he no longer has any control. Still in his filthy state and now confused as well, Sweetie is thrown out of the Emperor's palace. Only Sweetie's wife is able to recognize her husband. She also recognizes his insanity and tells him that he has been tricked and that the Christians are laughing at him (vii). Hrotsvitha provides Sweetie with a wise wife who not only knows what is wrong with her husband but is appalled at his ignorance of his own condition. Her vision restores Sweetie's ability to see his

---

[15] See "Gallicanus" II,v,4.

situation, if not to understand its cause. As he becomes aware of his blackened and shameful appearance Hrotsvitha gives to Sweetie an ironic speech. "Now at last I know that I myself have been fooled by the wickedness of those women." (*Nunc tandem sentio, me illusum illarum maleficiis* vii.) Sweetie's misunderstanding of the cause of his predicament is emphasized by the repeated and linked sounds of the pun *illusum* and the misdirected *illarum*. The play or deceit or foolishness is, after all, not theirs but his. The framing of the incorrect conclusion by the *me* and *maleficiis* draws attention to the real cause of his trouble. Like the soldier of Roman comedy, Sweetie misplaces blame and, at the same time, looks for a violent solution. He is, of course, still deceived, for it is his own mischief which has caused his disgrace.

However, when he orders the women stripped and exposed in public, Sweetie is again incapable of carrying out his desires. His soldiers are unable to remove the clothing and Sweetie falls into a sleep from which he cannot be roused. Just as Sweetie's earlier lust was manifest on his face and clothes, now his moral sloth is manifest in his unconsciousness. When the situation is reported to the Emperor, Diocletian also uses the words "fooled" and "deceived" (*illusum* and *calumniatum*, ix), both rich with possible meanings, to indicate what has happened to Sweetie. Like the Roman soldier Sweetie is unaware and impotent, but in Christian drama his physical desires, his will to sin, not the fact that he is oblivious to the desires or the plots of others, are at the root of his problems.

In Scene ix, having exhausted the feeble resources of one bragging soldier, Diocletian orders Sisinnius to take over the pursuit of his vengeance. Sisinnius is ingenious, vigorous, and devoted to the orders of his master. An evil slave is sent in to replace the evil soldier. Indeed, Purity, recognizing his character, tells Sisinnius that he must obey Diocletian's orders and have her put to death (xi). Sisinnius' inventiveness in separating Peace, the youngest, from her sisters in hopes of preserving one woman to do his master's bidding gives Sisinnius at least one of the characteristics of a clever slave; but his planning is all for naught. He is undeterred by the miraculous preservation of the bodies of Love and Purity who die in a fiery furnace. He threatens Peace with a brothel, but is tricked by supernatural persons who take her instead to a mountain top. Even in the face of Peace's continued miraculous escapes, Sisinnius is reluctant to become discouraged. Finally, unable to understand the path to righteousness or to retrace his steps to Diocletian, but lost on a mountain, Sisinnius orders Peace shot with an arrow. Thus Sisinnius has the same opportunity for salvation which Terentianus has in *Gallicanus*, but Sisinnius is unable to change direction; he is unable to retreat down the mountain. As she dies, Peace comments on Sisinnius' inability to defeat her:

> Infelix, erubesce, Sisinni, erubesce, teque turpiter victum ingemisce, quia tenellae infantiam virgunculae absque armorum apparatu nequivisti superare. (xiv, 3)
>
> Blush, unfortunate Sisinius, blush and disgracefully lament your life because you were unable to conquer the infancy of a delicate young virgin without magnificence of weapons.

Clearly Sweetie and Sisinnius are up against powerful competition, and Love tells Diocletian in her first speech that she and her sisters are refusing Diocletian's offer of marriage because,

> nec ad negationem confitendi nominis, nec ad corruptionem integritatis ullis rebus compelli poterimus. (I,2)
>
> we are unable to be forced by any thing either to a denial of the name which we acknowledge, or to the corruption of [our] chastity.

Someone else has a prior claim. Peace makes clear whom they love, when she declares to Diocletian:

> Hoc optamus, hoc amplectimur, ut pro Christi amore suppliciis laceremur. (i,8)
>
> What we wish for, what we embrace, is that we be wracked by tortures for the love of Christ.

As Purity and Love are thrown into the furnace the latter expresses some fear that the Lord might intervene and not allow the fire to burn them, might postpone the meeting with the true love. "Our delay is wearying," (*Sed taedet nos morarum*) she says and begs that "our spirits may rejoice with You in heaven" (*plaudant in aethre nostri spiritus.* xi,4). All the strength of the soldiers and their slaves is impotent against the love of the women and the power of the young lover to win his betrothed ones.

In both *Gallicanus* and *Dulcitius* the young lover has a prior claim, although the earthly powers may consider their claims more legitimate. This is in contrast

to the Roman comedies in which the warrior's claim on the courtesan is usually first but is swept away by the greater love and persistence of the young lover. It is, however in keeping with the eternal nature of the young lover in Christian Drama.

The women in these plays are also unusual in that they behave more like the atypical courtesans of *Miles Gloriosus* and *Eunuchus*. They talk back and, faced with evil counsel, they take their destinies into their own hands. As in the classical comedies, however, there is no interaction between the bragging soldiers and the powerful lover. These soldiers proceed unaware, until it is too late, that they have been deluded, and the courtesans finding the haven or freedom found by all the courtesans in classical comedy, have escaped; in this case they escape to a heavenly home.

***

Hrotsvitha's third play begins with the words "The Resurrection of Drusiana and Calimachus" (*RESUSCITATIO DRUSIANAE ET CALIMACHI*) but the play has traditionally been referred to as *Calimachus*. *Calimachus*, with explicit rival lovers, and a love scene in the tomb, has, at once, the most classical and the most familiar of Hrotsvitha's plots: a combination of *Miles Gloriosus* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Calimachus falls in love with Drusiana, the wife of Andronicus. When

Drusiana's discovery of Calimachus' illicit lust causes her death Calimachus goes to her tomb, seeking there to embrace the dead and unresisting body of his love. At the tomb he has the help of Andronicus' servant, Fortunatus, or 'Lucky.' Before Calimachus can defile the dead Drusiana, however, a snake appears and both Calimachus and Lucky die. Andronicus and his chaplain come upon this remarkable scene and all of the dead are restored to life.

The woman in the play is Drusiana and her true love is God. Andronicus, her husband, and Calimachus, a local noble, compete with God for Drusiana's love. John is God's servant and representative; the unlucky Lucky is Andronicus' faithless servant, and Calimachus has a group of advisers. There are, therefore, several servants or slaves but only Calimachus is in any way military in the sense that a landholder, having feudal obligations, might be presumed to bear arms.

Calimachus begins the action by asking his friends to accompany him to some more private place where they will not be interrupted. The reasons for his request are soon clear. He wishes to discuss an emotion which is both inexpressible and illicit. Like all bragging warriors he has great difficulty describing any passion but violence. His conversation is terse in the extreme. From their conversation we learn that Calimachus' desires are as unlikely to be satisfied as any bragging soldier's.

The friends of Calimachus serve him better than he deserves. They go with him to hear his problem; they listen sympathetically even if he, like Romeo

rejecting Benvolio's advice, argues with them. When they hear that he is in love with Drusiana, they advise him that his love is hopeless. It is these advisers who tell us that Drusiana "has offered herself entirely to God" (*totam se devovit deo,* ii,4). Calimachus says that they are not much comfort and they neatly reply that friends who pretend are deceivers, and those who utter flattery sell the truth. This moral view of flattery, and the scholastic nature of the exercise through which the friends persuade Calimachus to tell whom he loves, alert the audience to the educated worthiness of these advisers. Calimachus refuses such wisdom at his peril. These friends, like John and Paul, in *Gallicanus*, are servants who recognize the call of a greater love than the lust which a Gallicanus or a Calimachus feels. The friends point out both Drusiana's earthly connection to her husband and her dedication to God, but Calimachus ignores both claims and defies fate.

Like a typical military lover, Calimachus ignores the servants of the true lover, and the wishes of the woman herself and throws himself at Drusiana presuming that she will love him. He, like Sweetie, is so blinded by the woman's beauty that he cannot see that someone else has a prior claim. He also cannot see that Drusiana's beauty is a function of her chastity. Drusiana points out to him that no legal bond or nearness of relationship compels him to love her and that his love is not reasonable. She calls him a disgusting procurer and tells him that his words are full of devilish deception. Because she already loves another, she is horrified. She knows that his words are "full of diabolical deception" (*plenum diabolica*

deceptione, iii,3). Rather than submit to a man whom she does not love, a man who is so arrogant that he is sure that she means "yes" when she says "no," she prays to die; and she does.

Andronicus, Drusiana's earthly spouse, is naturally upset by her death. Although he tells his spiritual advisor, John, that he is sure that Drusiana's soul is eternally happy, nonetheless, because he has overheard her final prayer, he is unhappy about the cause of his wife's death (v). Thus, like Gallicanus after his conversion, Andronicus is not God's rival; he is willing to allow the woman he loves to love God to the exclusion of all others. He will share the woman, though he may wish to pursue the person who is the cause of her death.

Calimachus, on the other hand, is not yet willing to share. Even into the grave he pursues Drusiana.

To aid Calimachus in his pursuit of Drusiana, Hrotsvitha uses a faithless steward. Andronicus says that "maintaining the grave shall be left to our steward Fortunatus" (*cura sepulchri Fortunato nostro relinquatur procuratori,* v,3). In the very next scene, Calimachus suborns the ironically named Lucky. Calimachus has money and, in an exchange typical of the relationship between soldier and slave, the soldier states that he is willing to pay. Lucky is willing to be bought. "If you will quiet me with money, I will surrender it [the body] to your uses" (*Si placabis muneribus, dedam illud tuis usibus.*vi,2), he says. When he has shown Calimachus to the tomb, Lucky issues an invitation to evil, "Use as you please"

(*Abutere, ut libet.*vii,1). The verb 'abutere' carries a double meaning both of use and abuse. The reward for such disregard of prior loves and claims of stewardship is swift.

A serpent appears and Calimachus, blaming Lucky for having misled him, exclaims,

En, tu morieris serpentis vulnere, et ego commorior prae timore. (vii, 2)

There! May you die wounded by the serpent and I die too of fear.

Like Terentianus, Lucky finds that serving the wrong master is punishable by death. Like Sweetie, Calimachus can express love only as aggression. His words to the dead Drusiana, "I can wound you as much as I want for your insults" (*quantislibet iniuriis te velim lacessere*. vii,1) are strangely violent but not unlike the emotion of Antamoenides in *Poenulus,* who threatens his courtesan with bruises when he sees her in the arms of her loving family.[16] Calimachus suffers emotionally for his failure to control his lust and anger. Indeed, he later confesses that although he wanted to possess Drusiana, even her dead body, he was totally unable to do so (ix,12). Thus his evil, his vice, is literally both impotent and frightened to death.

---

[16] This displacement of emotion has a familiar ring to anyone dealing with abuse. Attitudes to women have changed very little over the centuries.

In Scene viii as John and Andronicus go to visit the tomb, Christ appears on stage and is addressed by John as "Domine Jesu." John asks what service he may perform and is ordered by the Christ figure to raise Drusiana and "he who lies next to her tomb"(*qui iuxta sepulchrum illius iacet*, viii,1). John does as he is told and Drusiana and Calimachus rise. In scene ix, Andronicus says that while Calimachus was guilty of having "loved unlawfully" (*illicite amavit*) and "feverishly" (*in febrem*), Lucky was a "dishonest slave" (*inprobum servum*). Andronicus explains that being deceived by the delights of the flesh is less wicked than serving out of "malice" (*malitia*). So it proves, for Calimachus when raised to life is converted and willing to acknowledge the true lover; Lucky when recalled to life by the generous Drusiana takes one look at Calimachus and Drusiana and rather than "comprehend such plentiful virtuous grace" (*tantam habundanter vitutum gratiam sentiscere*, ix,28) he chooses to die. John the servant of God, calls this "the incredible envy of the devil" and the "malice of the ancient serpent" (*admiranda diaboli invidia...militia serpentis antiqui*, ix,29).

For *Calimachus* Hrotsvitha provides an ending like that of Terence's *Eunuchus* which allows the woman and all of her lovers and their servant to coexist. The only character excluded from the final happiness is the evil servant. John and Andronicus are capable of insight and the creativity of love. With the help of Drusiana's true love they have the power of life and death. For the luckless Lucky, however, the slave's willingness to aid and encourage Calimachus'

passions brings death. The play is enriched by having good servants try to advise an evil soldier, and by having an evil slave desert his rightful and righteous master to serve a less moral one.

****

Hrotsvitha's plays beginning "The Fall and Conversion of Mary the Niece of the Hermit Abraham" (*LAPSUS ET CONVERSIO MARIAE NEPTIS HABRAHAE HEREMICOLAE*) and "The Conversion of the Courtesan Thaïs" (*CONVERSIO THAIDIS MERETRICIS*) referred to as *Abraham* and *Paphnutius* respectively, appear on first reading to be two versions of the same story.[17] Regardless of their sources, these two legends tell quite literally of the conversion of "lewd women" which Hrotsvitha promises in her preface. The women in her other four plays are exemplary Christians; however, Mary and Thaïs are curiously converted parallels of the courtesans Pamphila and Thaïs in Terence's *Eunuchus*. In *Eunuchus* one young lover disguises himself as a eunuch and rapes Pamphila, the virgin ward of the courtesan Thaïs, while another lover, the older brother of the first, plots to gain the affections of the renowned courtesan Thaïs herself. In *Abraham* a hermit disguises himself as a lover to gain access to and rescue his niece, Mary, who has briefly erred after being seduced, much as Pamphila is, by a lover wearing a

[17] Although the two legends may have grown from one original incident or been contaminated by each other, they were already separate in the Greek menologies and, probably, in the source of Hrotsvitha's material. See Homeyer, *Opera*, 321.

disguise of an apparently non-threatening, non-sexual servant. In Terence the seducer wears the clothing of a eunuch; in Hrotsvitha's *Abraham* the seducer wears a monk's robe. In *Paphnutius* also the hermit disguises himself as a lover but the object of his holy attention is Thaïs, a "notorious courtesan" (i,23) and his intention is to rid the city of a public danger. The ironies and reversals of lovers and disguises add much to the pleasures of these plots.

Abraham and *Paphnutius* have few parts; in each play the woman and the servant of God dominate the action while disciples, colleagues, an abbess, an innkeeper and the courtesan's customers serve to create setting and provide dialogue. In spite of these limited casts, or perhaps because of them, the roles of the women and the servants of the true lover are clearly defined in each play. There is even, in one play, the vestige of a bragging soldier.

In both plays the hermits are clearly the servants of a divine master and retain some of the elements of the clever slave, using all the deviousness of slaves to win the women from a false love to a true one. It is not within the scope of the present observations to discuss the Christian attributes of Abraham and Paphnutius, their learned discourse, their earnest kindness, or their devotion to their master. It is important to note that their devotion to God is a devotion to a new kind of master in whose service kindness and articulate defense are to be expected. Slaves in Roman drama were expected to win the woman for young lover. Abraham and

Paphnutius, in their willingness to risk everything for their masters are worthy literary descendants of their classical ancestors.

Each of the hermits pretends to be a lover to win the woman for his master. It is also clear that the hermits act for a lover who is not present. In *Abraham* the language of love is used when the woman is still a child. Abraham's friend Ephrem promises the child, Mary, that if she keeps her "body chaste and her mind pure" the Virgin's Son "will fold her in his embrace in the brightly shining wedding chamber of his mother" (*Illibata corporis integritate puraque mentis sanctiate...donec amplexaris amplexibus filii virginis in lucifluo thalamo sui genitricis.* ii, 4-5). Many years later the disguised Abraham, identifying himself to the courtesan Mary in the brothel, removes his borrowed hat and reminds her that he is the person who once betrothed her to the king of heaven (vii,2). Paphnutius too uses the language of love when he tells Thaïs that because she has renounced her earthly lovers she may now be "joined to a heavenly lover" (*superno amatori...copulari.* v,2).

Pretending to be lovers requires that both hermits use deceit and disguise to avoid antagonizing pimps and regular customers as well as to postpone identifying themselves until they are alone with the women. Abraham tells the innkeeper that he has come to look at Mary because he has heard of her beauty. Paphnutius refuses to tell his rivals why he has come to the city but he too says he has heard of the woman's great beauty. The choosing of a disguise makes both hermits behave

self-consciously. Paphnutius asks his disciples, "What if I go to her in the guise of a lover?" (*Quid, si illam adeam sub specie amatoris,* i,28). Abraham discusses his disguise in some detail with his friend Ephrem. Abraham is also conscious of the acting required of him. On first seeing Mary he says to himself, "with the feigned cheerfulness of my face I conceal the bitterness of my inner dejection" (*simulata vultus hilaritate internae amaritudinem maestitudinis contego.* vi,1). A moment later, overcome by his niece's touch he gives himself orders, "Now, I must pretend; I must rely upon insolence in the manner of a playful slave" (*nunc est simulandum, nunc lascivientis more pueri iocis instandum,* vi,3). Clearly Hrotsvitha and her audience understood the role of the clever slave in literary interactions. The services that these two hermits perform, the connection with the courtesan, the relationship with a master and the self-conscious, deceitful, clever way in which they plan and execute their services leave no doubt that these are relatives of the intriguing slaves of Roman comedy.

There are, therefore, in these two plays, courtesans, lovers, and clever slaves; there are, with a small exception, no soldiers of any kind. However, when Abraham chooses a disguise for his trip to the city to rescue Mary, he asks for a soldier's clothing (*militarem habitum* iv,5). In other words, the proper antithesis of the Virgin's Son is a soldier. Brief though the scenes are in which Abraham discusses or wears the costume of the soldier, in them Hrotsvitha associates with the soldier several of his classical attributes. In addition to wearing the military

clothing, Abraham discusses with Ephrem the necessity to eat meat and drink wine when he is out in the world; when he arrives at the inn he orders dinner and asks that Mary share it with him. Abraham also recognizes the necessity to carry money in his new role; so he carries with him a gold piece to pay for his visit. Abraham's effort to joke has already been mentioned. Thus the connection with language, food, money and rivalry are all present in this brief portrait of a soldier. What is also clear is that he is unwilling to do these things, that he does them only as a means to a holy end. The behaviours themselves are not desirable, are, if not sinful, at least invitations to sin.

Almost as curious as the things which are mentioned are the things which are not. There is no mention of weapons or armour, both of which surely figured largely in the lives of contemporary soldiers. The language of the hermit/soldier is deceitful, rather than bragging; after all when the hermit is in disguise he has no one to flatter him. In his soldier role, though not in his servant role, he is of course, also impotent. He pretends to be a customer of the fallen woman; however, the moment he is recognized, he reverts to his role as servant of Christ. In that role, Abraham remains a good servant, willing to do anything, even to break his vows by going back into the world and eating meat and drinking wine, in order to carry out his master's work.

*****

The last of Hrotsvitha's plays begins with the words "The Suffering of the Holy Virgins, Faith, Hope, and Love" (*PASSIO SANCTARUM VIRGINUM FIDEI SPEI ET KARITATIS*), but the play is usually referred to by the Latin name of the mother of the three martyrs, Sapientia or 'Wisdom.' The action of this play is similar to the action of *Dulcitius* but while the three women in *Dulcitius* face first a self-serving sensual official, and then a servile violent one, the four women in *Sapientia* face at one time two powerful officials, the Emperor Hadrian and his lieutenant, Antiochus. In this play also, however, the struggle between the sacred and the profane takes place in two distinct phases. First Wisdom, the mother, engages in an intellectual struggle with Hadrian; then, in the second part, the suffering of the three daughters provides a physical struggle to parallel the philosophical one.

The cast of *Sapientia* offers only two candidates for the role of bragging soldier. Antiochus and Hadrian are the only men in the play with speaking parts; neither of them brags of physical beauty, martial exploits, or sexual conquest. Nonetheless, Scene i opens with Antiochus playing parasite to the Emperor Hadrian in the most obvious and fulsome manner.

Hadrian accepts Antiochus' self-serving language and reminds Antiochus of the rewards which parasites earn: "Our prosperity is your happiness" (*nostri*

prosperitas tui est felicitas, i,1). There are other ways in which Antiochus expresses the concerns typical of parasites. He is a creature of physical appetites. When Hadrian cannot believe the "arrival of so few weak women" (*tantillarum adventus muliercularum,* i,3) is a threat to his state, Antiochus presumes that Hadrian shares his own appetites. Antiochus explains that the Christian women are a threat because under their influence the wives of Romans

> fastidiendo nos contempnunt adeo, ut dedignantur nobiscum commedere, quanto minus dormire. (I,5)
>
> disdain us so much that they do not think us worthy to eat with much less to sleep with.

This is not Antiochus' only reference to food; he later interrupts Wisdom's instruction of the Emperor in Boethian mathematics by referring to worldly considerations:

> deis abiit, nox incumbit; non est tempus altercandi, quia instat hora cenandi. (iii,24)
>
> Day has gone; night is falling; it is not the time for debate, because the dinner hour approaches.

Thus Antiochus simultaneously recognizes the immanence of the powers of darkness and rejects the opportunity of enlightenment. Antiochus does not enter the discussion of Boethian mathematics into which Hadrian's intellectual vanity leads him. Antiochus enters the fray to make it physical. He remains on the literal level while Wisdom and her three virtuous daughters offer intellectual and spiritual

food. In this as in many other situations, Antiochus directs Hadrian's actions against the forces of good. It is Antiochus who urges Hadrian to control the Christian women who are, Antiochus says, rebelling against the peace (*pacis defectum,* i,3). When Hadrian is lost in admiration of the women's beauty it is Antiochus who reminds the Emperor of the purpose of the visit (iii,2). Antiochus encourages Hadrian to use flattery to win over the weak women (iii,3). Throughout the torture scene, Antiochus plans and encourages the Emperor. When Faith, Hope, or Love remarks on the Emperor's stupidity, as each of them in her turn does, Antiochus reminds Hadrian that his dignity is in danger (Faith, v,4; Hope, v,17; Love, v,33). As the struggle proceeds it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between the parasite's will and his host's decisions. Hope tells Hadrian that:

> Quanto plus saevis, tanto magis victus confunderis. (v,21)
>
> The more cruel you are the more greatly you will be thrown into disorder when you are defeated.

Indeed, even before they have executed Hope, the second martyr, both men know themselves defeated. "We are beaten" (*Victi sumus*), says Hadrian and Antiochus replies, "Thoroughly" (*Penitus,* v,25). Their tormenting of the final and youngest of the three martyrs, Love, is pursued without enthusiasm; they are prisoners of their own lack of imagination, proceeding because they cannot think to stop but getting no joy from the process in which thousands of their soldiers perish in the fires intended for Hope and Love. The huge numbers of soldiers which, in a play

like *Miles Gloriosus*, were understood by audience and players alike – the only character who may have come to believe in them being the soldier – to be fanciful embroidery, in "Sapientia" acquire a threatening life and then in death become an army of the damned. In the end Hadrian "blushes" to see Love again and orders her killed (vi,3). The parasite has encouraged and planned and used all of Hadrian's resources to no effect.

Hadrian's enormous physical resources and his acceptance of Antiochus' flattery has already been noted, as has his failure to recognize the power of his rival. These characteristics make him a candidate for the role of bragging soldier. Clearly Hadrian is also powerless to master the women; his moral sloth also makes him incapable of managing Antiochus. His impotence, if nothing else, identifies him as a bragging soldier. Hadrian's desire to master the women is not so obviously physical as the passion expressed by Sweety or Calimachus. It is at Antiochus' urging that the women come before the Emperor at all and, as Antiochus reminds Hadrian and the audience, the reason for the women's presence is their reluctance to worship the Roman gods (iii,2). However, Hadrian is smitten. "I am astounded at the beauty of each of them," says Hadrian when he first sees Wisdom and her three daughters (*Uniuscuiusque pulchritudinem obstupesco,* iii, 2). He uses the verb *obstupesco* with its connotation of loss of sense and this too he shares with the classical bragging soldier. He loses his senses; he is stupid. Faith, Hope, and Love each tell him he is stupid and so does

their mother, Wisdom (*hunc stultum,* iii, 8). Hadrian offers friendship, flattery, and false gods (iii, 3). He says that he is impressed by what he sees and hears from Wisdom and he makes a pun describing the wisdom of her name shining in her mouth but he does not have eyes to see nor ears to hear her, and he refuses to understand her (iii, 6). He listens to her discourse on number, not to appreciate "the wisdom of the Supreme Creator" as Wisdom directs (iii, 22) but to persuade her to submit to the worship of his gods (iii, 23). He might just as well not have spoken to her. He recognizes the power of language but does not understand it.

Like the classical bragging soldier he has no interest in his rival; he barely acknowledges the existence of the true lover and he certainly does not wish to hear the women discuss his rival. He is sure that his charm or his force will win the day.

Wisdom knows the true lover and has betrothed her daughters to him.

> Ad hoc vos materno lacte affluenter alui, ad hoc delicate nutrivi, ut vos caelesti, non terreno, sponso traderem. (iv,3)
>
> I nourished you abundantly with my mother's milk for this; I brought you up tenderly for this; so that I might commit you to a heavenly, not an earthly bridegroom.

Her daughters are ready to die for "the love of that same lover" (*pro ipsius amore sponsi,* iv, 4). In the end they defeat the bragging soldier by joining Christ.

*

Six plays and their major characters step into the tenth century refectory or cloister garden, walking, parading, skipping, stumbling; the plot is still directed by servants, driven still by the conflict between the young lover and his older rivals who ostensibly fight for the woman but really fight for more basic things which the courtesans and martyrs represent: control or power, creation, renewal, life, immortality. The essentials of the plot have not changed; the setting has. The scenes in which a bragging soldier plays a significant part have moved from the commercial world of the street to the political world of the court, in other words to the world where the dialogues are set, to the centres of power in the middle ages. The plays without a bragging soldier (*Abraham* and *Paphnutius*) alternate between the safe world of country community and the dangerous world of the city tavern. The writer has moved the conflict to tenth century settings with resulting changes in language, behaviour and detail.

More significantly, the time frame in which the plot operates has changed. Characters who, in Roman comedy, were concerned with the needs of the moment – what they would eat, or with whom they would sleep – move into a setting which stretches to eternity. As has just been noted in Antiochus' case, some characters are more aware of this change than others. The awareness is a direct result of which master the character serves.

Some conclusions then are in order. Drawing conclusions about the information in this chapter is far more difficult than summarizing the first chapter. The first chapter concentrated on the works of Plautus and Terence; however, this chapter, because it is comparative, providing the link between the Classical Period and the Renaissance, looks both backward and forward over great chasms of time, times about which we often have but the vaguest knowledge of dramatic, or literary developments . Like the summary for Chapter I this summary must attempt to describe the character of the bragging soldier and those around him as they appear at one moment in the tenth century and in one corner of Saxony. Like the summary for Chapter I this summary must suggest the relationships between the characters. Clearly the similarities between Hrotsvitha's characters and those of classical comedy are of great interest. It is these similarities which have been used to identify the characters and these which will be of interest in the next chapter also when the characters emerge in various guises on recognizable stages.

However, it is also necessary to discuss ways in which these characters and relationships have changed in the centuries since Plautus and Terence shaped their comedies. I do not propose to do much more than suggest what the changes are. The reasons for these changes have in some cases been explored already and in other cases would seem fertile areas for study. I am not claiming that Hrotsvitha was responsible for all of the developments in characters which took place between the time of Terence and the time of her own writing. She may be

responsible for none of them. In so far as her sources can be determined she seems to take her material quite directly from them. What has rarely been discussed is the extent to which the early Christian writers were influenced by stereotypes which came to them from the Roman comedies and the popular culture of the early centuries of Christianity. It may be that the similarity at the core of the stories, the basic struggle of the plot, allowed both classical and Christian writers to use similar characters and relationships.

In general, what happened to the bragging soldier and his friends as they encountered Christianity? A summary of the changes which have occurred by or in the tenth century may provide a field guide – may make it easier to recognize the outstanding features and the appeal of the bragging soldier and his associates as they enter the streets, market places, and playing spaces of medieval Christendom.

THE RIVALS

The bragging soldier still appears always as a rival. What is exciting is that in these works, at this time in history, the focus of the rivalry is in the process of shifting. It is clear that, because of the shift in the Christian's time frame, the rivalry is for the soul of the woman, but the soldier is not yet aware of the nature of the struggle. While the soldier may think that he is fighting to possess or have power over the mortal woman, the woman and the lover are aware that the immortal soul is what is in contest. In plays like *Paphnutius* or *Abraham* which

are interested in the relationship between the woman and the servants of the young lover and involve a more explicit, more internal struggle to save the soul for eternal life with the lover, neither the soldier nor his companion the unfaithful servant appear. In the plays in which the soldier does appear, he is similar to his classical forebears in that he does not meet, and on most occasions does not acknowledge, the claims of his rival, the young lover. However, given that the struggle for human souls is the stuff of much medieval drama, it is clear that there may yet be fruitful battlefields in store for the soldier. In Hrotsvitha's plays the psychomachia as the stuff of drama is still in embryo.

THE EVERLASTING ARMS

For both the Christian writer and the Christian audience the underlying assumption is that God is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent and this is true of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In casting Christ as a force, if not always as a character, in Christian drama the writers do not generally question or, indeed, consider these underlying assumptions; it is not clear to what extent Hrotsvitha is aware that she has cast Christ as a character in her plays and this is true in later dramas also. God or Christ rarely appear, except in the Mystery Cycle plays which demand their presence. Hrotsvitha chooses her sources and follows them faithfully, embroidering them but not changing them. However, because Christ is a force in the lives and loves of some of the characters who do walk the stage, they

cannot but be changed by His omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence. The change in the young lover, the change which makes him Christ, or more generally, more figuratively constructs the young lover as God's love, this change is the crucible in which Christian drama recreates the classical drama.

It is difficult to determine whether the young lover's role is more changed by the new time scale in which he exists or by the increase in his power. The two clearly are intertwined but effect different characters who interact with the young lover in different ways. God's plans are worked out in eternity and only His mortal and aging rivals feel the pressure of time. Calimachus hurries to the grave to make love to the dead body of Drusiana, presumably before it putrefies; Constantine pressures Gallicanus to war before his enemies attack; Antiochus notes the coming on of night when he may eat. Earthly pleasures have earthly timetables. To those who love Christ, the young lover, however, time is less relevant. They may wish to be with him as soon as possible but they have nothing to lose with the passing of time, except, perhaps, patience. Constantia lives out her life doing good. So presumably does the resurrected Drusiana. Their knowledge that time does not matter gives Christ's brides a sense of power not available to the female victims in classical comedy.

As for the lover himself, in Hrotsvitha he is no longer ineffectually present; he is powerfully absent and the power of his love must be reported and interpreted by his servants and by those who love him. Christ as bridegroom is powerful and

invulnerable and yet, paradoxically, his role in drama is changed amazingly little. I earlier suggest that in Roman comedy the plot is usually entrusted to friends or slaves or happy accidents while the lovers love. In Hrotsvitha this has not changed. The lover has withdrawn almost completely from the stage but not from the plot. He loves, eternally. He makes three brief 'appearances' in Hrotsvitha's work: one in *Gallicanus* and two in *Calimachus*; the manifestations are all reported, not seen by the audience. Gallicanus reports that "a youth of immense stature" carrying a cross appeared and with him a heavenly army who helped him to defeat Bradan (I, xi, 7). This unusual event in which the young lover aids his rival, the bragging soldier, results in the young lover's winning his bride. As a result of his victory in war Gallicanus loses in love; as he becomes a real warrior he renounces his claim to Constantia. But as in classical comedy, it happens that in fact the young lover's success is determined long before the play begins. Constantia later explains to Gallicanus that "the lover of virginal modesty" had already marked her and her virginity for himself (I, xii, 3). In *Calimachus* John and Andronicus, hurrying to Drusiana's tomb, see

> invisibilis deus nobis apparet visibilis in pulcherrimi similitudine iuvenis. (viii, 2)
>
> the invisible god appears to us made visible in the beautiful appearance of a youth.

This vision directs that Drusiana be raised from the dead. Calimachus later reports that the youth had appeared to him also. The appearances are not made to the

women, who are already in love and need no direction, but to those who turn the plot; Christ plays power politics. In Roman comedy the lover with no resources but his affectionate and generous nature always won. His strength was the strength of youth and love which defeat age and violence simply by existing. In this respect Christ is little changed; He is still generous, having given everything for the salvation of the loved one. Now, however, having given the gift of life Christ no longer requires an earthly presence to defeat his rivals. His resources, as Gallicanus and Bradan discover, are formidable and yet are rarely so visible or so visibly employed as were the meager resources of the lover in Roman comedy.

Like the young lover's appeal, Christ's power and appeal are illustrated by his ability to win the women. Like his Roman antecedent the young lover is preferred over the wealthy and experienced soldier. The promise of fertility and renewal is now played out on an eternal stage where, paradoxically, virginity in this life leads to renewal in the next. Each of the women in Hrotsvitha's plays relates to God as spouse or lover. Rosemary Woolf says that,

> The popularity of the theme [of Christ the Lover-Knight] undoubtedly arose from its exceptional fitness to express the dominant idea of medieval piety, that Christ endured the torments of the Passion in order to win man's love. This stress upon a personal and emotional relationship between God and man in the work of Redemption was new in the twelfth century. Previously the nature of the Redemption had been defined as a conquest of the devil, and the practical consequences of this was shown to the laity to consist of obedience to God's commands by the observing of moral laws and the theological instruction of the Church.[18]

---

[18] Rosemary Woolf, "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature", *Review of English Studies*. New Series, vol.xiii, #49

While agreeing heartily with Woolf's reasons for the popularity of the theme of Christ the Lover-Knight, I would suggest that the idea of Christ as lover is implicit in the conquest of the devil, and that the struggle is clearly illustrated in Hrotsvitha some time before it is embroidered with the trappings of chivalry and the consequent complexities of unfaithfulness which the chivalric ideal raised in later centuries. In each of Hrotsvitha's plays there is language suggesting Christ as a lover or bridegroom. Ephrem in *Abraham* clearly articulates the idea when he expresses to eight year old Mary his wish that "The heavenly bride groom preserve you from all the deceit of the devil" (*Caelestis sponsus, tueatur te ab omni fraude diaboli* ii,8). Christ was an alternative to the lovers and lusts of this world with all the dangers to life and soul which these implied. The women of European territories newly converted to Christianity knew this or sensed it and flocked to newly founded religious communities.[19] Hrotsvitha was herself one of them.

The young lover is still in competition with the bragging soldier and there is still no interaction between them. Bragging soldiers such as Calimachus, Julian, and Hadrian do not acknowledge the force of the claims of the Christ-lover, though they may be to some degree aware that the claims exist. Gallicanus sees

---

(1962):1. This article presents in some detail the references from Biblical and patristic sources which contributed to this theme in medieval writing.

[19] See K.J. Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society:Ottonian Saxony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), in particular "The Saxon Nunneries,"63-73.

Christ only after his own power has been defeated and for an understanding of the claims of the young lover he must depend on the advice of the servants, John and Paul. However, the timing of the claims has changed. In Roman comedy the woman usually belonged first to the bragging soldier and then fell in love with the young lover. In Christian drama, played out on an eternal scale, the young lover has a prior claim, established at the Creation and renewed at the Crucifixion, which the bragging soldier tries, often violently, to deny. The more violent the denial the swifter is the young lover's victory.

FOOD AND FLATTERY

The parasite survives. His traits survive, grouped together in recognizable ways. Recognizable, naturally, is the parasite's flattery. Flattery, however, is no longer essentially self-serving and therefore comic. In Christian drama self-absorption denies the pre-eminence of God and is, therefore, not funny; it is sinful. In Hrotsvitha's plays flattery is despicable and used only by sinners. The women in *Dulcitius* and *Sapientia* and the advisers in *Calimachus* leave their audiences in no doubt on this score. The friends of Calimachus explain their honest advice by saying, "Who pretends, deceives, and who utters flattery sells the truth" (*Qui simulat, fallit; et qui profert adulationem, vendit veritatem.* ii, 4).[20] Flattery, therefore, is a sin for both the flatterer, who lies, and the person flattered, who

[20] Vulgate. Proverbs 23,23, *Veritatem eme et noli vendre sapientiam.*

accepts lies. The parasite as a consequence becomes a force for evil; it follows that his associates, the soldiers, because they allow the evil to continue and because they accept the flattery, may be expected to be evil also. In the comedy of evil the parasite's talents, inherited from classical comedy, clearly allow him to continue in his role, flattering the bragging soldier, the tyrant, the devil or anyone else who will satisfy his lusts.

The parasite is still associated with food but his appetites have become more general. Antiochus, for example, connects the desire for food with the desire for women (S i, 5). The Emperor Constantine to maintain his security plays parasite/pimp to Gallicanus; he is willing to flatter the pagan general and will give his Christian daughter, a daughter whom he knows has taken a vow to remain a virgin dedicated to Christ, to Gallicanus if the soldier maintains the Emperor's comfort and power. In this way, in Hrotsvitha's drama the parasite's desire for food often manifests itself as the more comprehensive sin, *gula*.

It is noteworthy that although the parasite has enlarged his appetite he is still dependent. Despite his increased power, he never just walks off and leaves the soldier. Constantine, though he has an Emperor's power to command, is as dependent as any parasite for his safety, for his earthly comfort, on his general, Gallicanus. Antiochus, though providing the will-power, shows no desire to rule independently of Hadrian. The parasite still has some ability to plan, but, morally lazy and obsessed by the desires of the flesh, he becomes incapable of thinking

deeply enough to be devious. He wills instead of thinking, but he still directs the action of the bragging soldier, and this is what distinguishes him from the soldiers' slaves. In the first half of *Gallicanus*, Constantine's lack of integrity allows him to ignore his daughter's wishes as he flatters Gallicanus and pimps for him. He is unaware of the plots of his daughter or her chaplains, though, being lazy and wanting security, he is vastly relieved to find that everything has worked out. Similarly, during Wisdom's long learned dialogue with Hadrian, Antiochus, the parasite, says not a word. He is not thinking or considering her wisdom; he is waiting for dinner. In the second part of *Sapientia*, Antiochus suggests all manner of physical violence but is finally unable to think of an action which will make the young women submit to the Emperor; eventually the two men, devoid of ideas, agree that there is nothing to be done but to execute Love. When the earthly powers have destroyed Love there is no further role for them and they do not speak again. Because the longings of Hrotsvitha's Christian heroes and heroines are for another world, the parasite's this-worldly desires and questionable plans are doomed to failure. These observations are true also of the parasitic elements in a character like Sweetie, who combines the characteristics of a parasite and a bragging soldier. Sweetie's immorality, his longing for the women leads him to the kitchen. His physical desires and his inability to think because of these desires lead him to public mockery. When he realizes his condition, he "senses" (*sentio*) it rather than knowing it (*Dulcitius* vii,).

VIRGINS AND WHORES

At first glance it appears that the women in Hrotsvitha's plays have, as she suggested in her prologue, simply been converted from their courtesan roles in Roman comedy to more seemly roles of Christian daughters, sisters and wives. Such a conversion would imply that that the women who are victims of their lovers or pimps in Terence (and, by extension, of those in Plautus) can, if they are Christians, control their destinies, stand up to their owners, refuse marriage or concubinage, and remain pure while the independent courtesans of classical comedy, such as Thaïs and Phronesium, if they give up their sin and make atonement, may also be saved.

However, the conversion is not so simple, and this is a result of the change in time frame from the mortal to the eternal. Instead, the courtesans of Roman comedy who control their own bodies and use them for business, Thaïs and Phronesium, have much in common with the determinedly virginal independent heroines of *Gallicanus*, *Calimachus*, *Dulcitius*, and *Sapientia*: they make their own plans; they use language against the soldiers; they talk cleverly, even learnedly; they control the soldiers (at least in part); they know what they want and, one way or another, they get it. The women betrothed to God are, indeed, independent women, not dependent on the powers of this world. Thaïs and Phronesium in classical drama took on some of the attributes of soldiers; in

Christian drama the independent virgins are warriors too but untouched by the soldiers' evil. Their innocence makes them impervious to the pressures of time. On the other hand the helpless courtesans who try but fail to live independently in *Abraham* and *Paphnutius* have much in common with the dependent courtesans of Roman comedy: they are seduced; they rely on the servants of the true lover to rescue them; they may renounce language, as Hrotsvitha's Thaïs does; they have little contact with either the bragging soldier or the true lover. Because in Christian drama they have sinned, they are slaves of time, struggling to atone for their sins in the time before they die. Women who submit to the true lover are, in Christian drama, strong and independent against the bragging soldier; those who do not submit at all times to the true lover must submit to everyone else. The lesson for Hrotsvitha's female audience is clear.

All of Hrotsvitha's women, in any case, acknowledge the prior claim of the young lover, although two of them forget it for a time, and most require the services of the young lover's servants. Constantia needs John and Paul to direct the bragging soldier as he becomes a soldier for Christ. Drusiana would remain dead were it not for John. Thaïs and Mary would remain morally dead were they not rescued by Paphnutius and Abraham.

The trios of young women in *Dulcitius* and *Sapientia* are the exceptions who need no teacher; they have wisdom. Their allegorical nature no doubt is responsible for this. Faith, Hope, Love, Peace and Purity are aspects of the lover

merely waiting to be reunited with him and undaunted by the violence of earthly passions. It is these two plays with their allegorical nature which suggest the proper role of women in all of Hrotsvitha's plays and perhaps in much Christian drama. In *Dulcitius* and *Sapientia* the women themselves act as good servants, spokespersons of the young lovers, aspects of the young lovers, waiting only to be reunited with him; they, like the other good servants, step into the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the fears and longings expressed by the young lovers of Roman comedy. The women are the rewards which the young lover wins or joins to himself. They are his attributes, his proof of power and fertility. As in Roman comedy the bragging soldier loses the services of the women; the young lover gains them. The virgins save themselves for the young lover. The non-virgins purify themselves to be worthy of him. Hrotsvitha's women present two of the three faces of women who appear in much of medieval drama and literature. They may be relentlessly pure or they may fall and be rescued. Hrotsvitha has no room for the unredeemed woman.

SERVANTS AND THEIR MASTERS

In Roman comedy the slave, or someone like him, was the character who did battle with the soldier. In Christian drama this is not changed. The physical absence of the lover requires that agents articulate and perform his will. Thus the role of the slave is still required, though surprisingly in Hrotsvitha's plays it is

diminished, not enlarged. While the soldier's rank and power have become literal, not created entirely by his slaves and parasites, the young lover's power is now implicit. The language of the servants of the young lover still drives the action of the play, as John and Paul in *Gallicanus*, or the hermits Abraham and Paphnutius clearly demonstrate. Their language still reveals the bragging soldier for the fraud he is. They are, it is true, much more successful than their classical ancestors in the turning of the plot, though the superior resources of the lover whom they serve are in large part responsible for their success. The counsel of John and Paul does convert Gallicanus; the advice of John does restore Drusiana and convert Calimachus; Abraham and Paphnutius do rescue Mary and Thaïs; all of this happens without happy accident or remarkable coincidence, because they are clearly working as agents of the young lover. Wisdom who has the role of teacher, and intermediary between the lover and her daughters, personifies the wisdom, drive, and dedication of the Christian servant. These servants are, however, no longer as amusing as classical slaves for they have taken on some of the circumspection which accompanies power. They do not need to bustle or run so quickly to create what was in classical comedy, as I have suggested, only an illusion of power. Illusion is amusing; real power is not.

This is not to say that the faithful servants are entirely dour or give no cause for humour. Paphnutius' students complain in the manner of students in every age about the difficulties of the lesson – in this case about the complexities of his

argument about music. Wisdom's lecture on number is both instructive and amusing. Hadrian's struggles to understand her provide an insight into the shallowness of his character. Such scenes might be presented to humorous effect but the humour arises from the lack of comprehension in the hearers not from the behaviour of the lover's servant or from the wisdom itself. So just as Palaestrio directs the audience to laugh at the gullible Pyrgopolynices, Wisdom illustrates for her daughters and for the audience the laughable stupidity of Hadrian's earthly concerns. Language is still powerful and creative; those who do not understand 'The Word' are laughable and they are the source of humour in Christian drama.

The young lover's slave in Roman comedy resorted to his wits and wittiness because he had no other resources. In Hrotsvitha's plays the young lover is omnipotent, needing servants to interpret for him rather than to act for him, to mediate rather than to fight. Because the young lover has become more powerful, his antagonists, the bragging soldiers and his parasites, must acquire some attributes as a result of, or as compensation for, their loss of power. Otherwise there would be no contest, no agon, no drama. The bragging soldier, therefore, often acquires a clever slave in addition to his parasite.

The servants in *Gallicanus* demonstrate the split in the slave of Roman comedy when he reappears in medieval drama. John and Paul serve Christ; Terentianus serves Julian. John and Paul will continue to be faithful confidantes and advisers to dramatic young lovers; on the other hand, Terentianus and

Fortunatus show us the Vice figure in embryo. The characteristics of the slaves of bragging soldiers are in many ways similar to those of the true lovers' slaves; similar also are their relationships to their masters. They are still energetic, devious, argumentative and faithful to a master. Both kinds of slave plan and, having created situations, are aware of acting in them. Both kinds of slave direct the actions of others whether, like Lucky, they encourage evil, or, like John they are wise counselors. They are now judged by which masters they choose to serve. Segal suggests in *Roman Laughter* that in the Roman comedies the desires of the young lover, which may seem anti-social, are opposed to the desires of a society usually represented by the father and his friends to whom the young man is reconciled by the end of the play.[21] The bragging soldier, who has opposed the young lover, either disappears or joins in the general reconciliation.

In Christian drama the young master (*adulescens*), remains opposed to the old man (*senex*), the evil powers of the world the flesh and the devil, the original Adam; the bragging soldier, when there is one, still stands on the side of the opposing forces. The struggle is not social but moral and the reconciliation or reckoning is not earthly but heavenly. The classical young lover, with a loving but essentially passive nature, was complemented by the activity of his bustling slave; in Christian drama servants like John and Paul continue to give invaluable service.

---

[21] Erich W. Segal, *Roman Laughter* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968). passim.

They fill with edifying language the space left by their absent master. They explain and advise; they argue with the rivals of the young lover; they quote from scripture or learned writing. Miracle or illusion provided by the young master may aid them in their enterprise, as in the cases where visions of the young lover appear to Gallicanus or Calimachus. With or without miracle or illusion the servants of the young lover continue to triumph over empty earthly power of the soldier and the servants associated with him.

To balance the increased power of the young lover and account for the enormous struggle between good and evil, the warrior with his fury also obtains the services of a clever, devious, and busy aide. Thus his potential for damage, though not for achievement, is greatly increased. Hrotsvitha provides two clear examples of the slave who serves the wrong master: Terentianus and Lucky. There are also elements of this slave in Sweetie. These slaves are capable of deception independent of their masters. Indeed, since bragging soldiers are now somewhat confined in action by their higher rank, their slaves must be able to plan when they are absent from their masters. (Those who cannot act independently I have designated as functionaries.) In *Gallicanus* Terentianus orders the hiding of the bodies of John and Paul; he also makes up the lie that John and Paul have left the country (II, vii, 2). In *Calimachus* Lucky tells Calimachus that Drusiana's body has not decayed and then offers to give Calimachus access to the body if the price is right (vi, 2). In *Dulcitius* Sweetie plans his visit to the pantry. None of

these servants can be trusted; even the masters' rights are neglected if they hamper the slaves' desires. Thus the hallmark of the slave who serves the wrong master is that he cannot be counted upon even to do that. Terentianus converts to Christianity. Lucky betrays his original master Andronicus and then leads Calimachus to destruction. Sweetie betrays both his wife and the Emperor when he seeks to seduce his prisoners. These slaves are as powerless as their betters and as driven by their own lusts. While the slaves of the true lover still defeat the bragging soldiers, the evil slaves defeat no one but themselves. If being unwittingly powerless is a source of humour, is the root of black comedy, there is great potential for humour here, but in Hrotsvitha it is only at the threshold of being realized.

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

The bragging soldier is still largely unaware of his rival. In his self-absorption he is also totally unaware that the young lover lives on another plane, historically, morally, and in terms of power. The soldier might have been expected, therefore, to change very little as a result of his move into a new era. In some ways this is true.

The bragging soldier is still associated with wealth; but his money instead of being a source of some generosity and a means to purchase the woman tends to lead him to avarice. Gallicanus bargains for a rich reward. Calimachus pays

Lucky, and the hermit Abraham, sworn to poverty, carries his gold piece when disguised as a soldier. Julian's jealousy of the prosperity of Christians, in general, and his greed for that being given out by John and Paul, in particular, suggests that the classical soldier's possession of money has been transformed. Centuries of folk performance, or of ambiguous – when not absolutely negative – Christian attitudes to wealth have changed the soldier from a character who was often generous with his wealth to one who is perceived as greedy.

What does change is the scope of the soldier's action, the size of his battlefield. The way in which the soldier's battlefield is enlarged is simple; he is promoted. The captain from Euboea, a soldier whose command of scores or hundreds of soldiers goes to his head, becomes in medieval drama a governor, king or Emperor whose command of a province or nation has gone to his head. He must be promoted so that he provides a plausible rivalry to God's power. He is also, in his position of greater responsibility, in a position to give orders to the women whom he desires. Thus is the classical relationship of ownership of a courtesan translated into the medieval relationship of feudal obligation. Seen in comparison to the power of God the Christian soldier's command, though it may be command of the Roman Empire, is still puny, but he does not know it, and foolishly he attempts to control those who owe allegiance to the true lover. The soldier's rise in rank is easily accounted for once it is clear that those whom he wishes to control owe their allegiance to God, rather than to earthly power. The

bragging soldier is a reflection; he is created in Roman drama by the reflected fear of the courtesan and the young lover. If he must instead be created by his own slaves and parasites, a lowly officer has not the rewards or the punishments sufficient to inspire the flattery required to maintain a bragging soldier adequate to rival the power of Christ. The self importance of a relatively unimportant officer in classical comedy is transferred to a person of high rank.[22] Hrotsvitha says in her opening summary that Gallicanus is a leader of soldiers, presumably the emperor's most important general; Julian and Hadrian are themselves Emperors.

Despite the soldiers' greater rank they still require the services of flatterers and planners, parasites and slaves to feed their vanity and to help them to plan. They are still a reflection of the fear of their friends, their foes, and the audience. Despite the fact that the tyrants may now vaguely acknowledge the young lover's existence, they do not acknowledge his power, and they are unaware that they are being used to further the young lover's plans. Despite the opportunities available to men of rank, the bragging soldiers retain the tastes of their antecedents and still lust after impossible objects. Calimachus lusts after a woman whom he is reliably informed has several reasons for not wanting him. Sweetie is already married to a perceptive woman, but chooses to press himself upon three virgins who not only do not want him, but have refused marriage to eligible nobles. Gallicanus is the

---

[22] D.C. Boughner, "The Braggart in Italian Renaissance Comedy,"*PMLA*. 58 (1943): 42-83. Boughner begins by discussing the upstart soldiers satirized by Menander and later employed by Plautus and Terence.

only bragging soldier in Hrotsvitha who is unaware of the reluctance of the woman. He does not discover that the object of his lust has taken a vow of chastity until he himself is converted. He is more like a classical bragging soldier in that he deals only with her father and her servants before the moment when he has lost the woman. Hadrian is the only bragging soldier in Hrotsvitha who does not lust after the bodies of the women. Not that he does not find them stunningly beautiful but his wishes are expressed as a desire to convert them to his gods, to control and own their souls rather than their bodies. In this way he most clearly shows us the soldier in transition to the Vicious Tyrant. The claims of potency both military and sexual which were made for the soldier in Roman comedy are now assumed, implicit, in the bragging soldier.

The woman will be highborn rather than a courtesan. She is owned, as in the case of Constantia, by a powerful father, or in the case of Drusiana by a powerful husband. The education of Sapienta leads to the presumption of wealth and comfort and the same is true to a lesser extent of the three martyrs in *Dulcitius*. The class of Mary is more uncertain but being placed in the care of a hermit or monastery assumes at least a level of gentility in Ottonian Saxony. In addition to being gentle, she is virtuous. The courtesan of Rome is not a suitable bride for Christ or an object which would cause Hadrian or Gallicanus any trouble to acquire. If Mary and Thaïs do not have either of these characteristics, it is important to note that they also are not objects of the rivalry between the young

lover and a bragging soldier. The parasites and slaves are similarly promoted. They are officers and courtiers. They have their own soldiers to command. The consequences of their actions are more dangerous. Real violence occurs.

In Christian drama the language which enlarges the soldier is still sometimes called into question: Calimachus friends question his reasoning; Wisdom and her daughters laugh at Hadrian's stupidity. Their warnings remind the audience not to trust the soldier. The soldier's claims are still unfounded and unfulfilled. He is an illusion whose power is real only in earthly terms. This illusion of power makes him a blacker figure: powerful on earth, but not in eternity. The Roman audience enjoyed being superior in thought and action to the soldier and to those who feared him; the sinner in the medieval audience has reason to fear this soldier. And this is perhaps the greatest change in the soldier as he marches from a Roman street onto the stage of eternity.

The bragging soldier is still impotent but he is no longer recognized as impotent by his associates. In Roman comedy the bragging soldier frightens only the woman and the young lover. All the others and the audience, often because they are directed by the clever slave, know that the soldier is being manipulated by his parasite, by his courtesan or by the clever slave, occasionally by all three. He is, therefore, always a figure of fun. In Christian drama the flatterers trust the power and claims of the bragging soldier and so from time to time, because the soldier now has advocates, does the audience. This creates an undercurrent of

anxiety which accompanies the bragging soldier through medieval drama. Even as the audience laughs at his grandiosity they recognize their own frailty.

Thus the emperors and military leaders who appear in Hrotsvitha's Christian drama are still connected with flattery, military prowess, amatory adventure, wealth and food, still unaware of the plots in which they act, and still impotent; in short, they possess all the characteristics of a bragging soldier, as summarized at the beginning of this chapter. Now, however, the soldier has risen in rank, he has his own tricky servant, he has acquired much more time on stage and he talks more. On the other hand, the young lover's absence and increased power mean that he occupies less time on stage. In Roman comedy the young lover was invisible to the bragging soldier; he was not invisible to the audience. The lover and his slave occupied several scenes while developing their schemes to win the courtesan. God does not need to worry about losing the woman, does not fret about the wisdom of His servant's plans. The vacuum caused by the removal of the young lover and his servants is filled by the soldier and his servants who do need to worry.

The bragging soldier in Christian drama stands clearly convicted of the seven deadly sins. When his self importance is linked to his continuing vanity and his enjoyment of flattery the bragging soldier personifies pride. He is lost in a moral sloth which allows him to be badly advised by his servants who often are driven by lust, gluttony and avarice. Sometimes these evils provide his own motivation for

action, they also lead him to envy. His anger is the result. The bragging soldier at one time or another acts out each of the seven deadly sins, often acting out several of them at once. The soldier is also seen as possessed by the devil. In her catechism of Boethius, Lady Philosophy points out that, because the omnipotent God can do no evil, evil is nothing.[23] The devil is, therefore, impotent and so, presumably, are his generals. What is more, they are humorous in their ignorance of their impotence. It is worth quoting Boethius to gain an appreciation of how natural it is for Hrotsvitha and writers both before and after her to view a bragging tyrant as a figure of vice. Boethius might, indeed be credited with inventing a narrative description of the Vicious Tyrant.

> Those high and mighty kings you see sitting on high in glory, dressed in purple, surrounded by armed guards, can breathe cruel fury, threaten with fierce words. But if you strip off the coverings of vain honor from those proud men, you will see underneath the tight chains they wear. Lust rules their hearts with greedy poisons, rage whips them, vexing their minds to stormy wrath. Sometimes they are slaves to sorrow, sometimes to delusive hope. This is the picture of individual man with all his tyrant passions; enslaved by these evil powers, he cannot do what he wishes.[24]

Thus described Julian and Sweetie may be seen as suitable links between the impotent lusts of Antimoenides and the impotent raging of Herod; it is also clear how and why Christian theology requires that Herod and his brothers are

---

[23] Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy.* Translated from the Latin by Richard Green. (Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1962) III, Prose 12: p.72.

[24] Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy.* IV, Poem 2, p. 81. It is clear that Hrotsvitha was familiar with this work as she quotes it in the letter to her patrons which follows her Preface to the dramas *Opera.* 235.

represented as they are. Hrotsvitha's bragging soldiers provide a clear moment in the development of evil in dramatic dialogue.[25] They also act out literally the privative nature of evil. The braggart appears when his rival is absent. Only the audience sees both the braggart and his rival; the audience lives the psychomachia in the way that a reader of narrative, influenced by the single, and usually admonitory, voice of the narrator cannot. Narrators may describe violent tyrants but the audience for drama is confronted with the noise and threats of evil men and must make its own decisions.

Indeed bragging soldiers are evil and in Hrotsvitha's plays they are also explicitly associated with the devil, whom they are said to serve. In *Gallicanus* Paul calls Julian "the devil's chaplain" (*diaboli capellanus,* II, v, 4). Sweetie in Scene iv of *Dulcitius* is described by Love as possessed by the devil and in Scene v his own soldiers describe him as "the devil himself"(*ipse diabolus*). Calimachus' unbridled passion allows him to be tempted by Lucky who is described by John as

---

[25] That Christian theology changes the Classical braggart answers the objections which Daniel Boughner raises to relating Herod to Pyrgopolynices and Thraso in his chapter on 'The English Miracle Plays' in *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy:AStudy in Comparative Drama from Aristophanes to Shakespeare* (University of Minneapolis Press, 1954),119-144. His argument is based, in part, on a belief that the tyrants issue from Senecan roots and in part, quite justifiably, on the argument that traces the Classical bragging soldier through Herod and into English comic figures, such as Ralph Roister Doister. Clearly the two streams of influence diverged when the soldier met Christianty, one surviving through the medieval period and being much changed, the other being revived in comic form with the Renaissance. Boughner's argument is also based on a premise that comedy and evil cannot co-exist within one character, an argument which, as we have seen runs contrary to basic understandings of evil. Boughner provides an excellent bibliography for the braggart soldier from his earliest boasting manifestations through the Renaissance.

"the devil's son" (*diabolo filium,* ix, 33). He has become vice personified, a close relative of the Vice figure literally as well as figuratively.

Other characters of Roman comedy might, in Christian context, be seen to be unregenerate sinners. The old man is avaricious, the parasite gluttonous, the lover lustful and so forth but none of them provides for the Christian moralist the wealth of sin that the bragging soldier exhibits. Recalling the distinction made in *Calimachus* between Calimachus and Lucky, we might say that the old man, the parasite and their like commit sins of the flesh. The slave commits sins of malice. The slave, whose pride is boundless and whose motives are suspect, the slave, who is the companion and the nemesis of the soldier, has the virtue of energy and often of charm which leads him to become the seductive Vice Figure. The bragging soldier usually falls into the same category as the slave. He has, alas, fewer redeeming features, other than his enormous usefulness as an object lesson, and the comedy inherent in his impotence and his exaggeration. What makes him so useful is his reflective (not self-reflective but reflecting) nature, his ability to be what the actor, or writer or audience fears is his or her own sin. He is our shadow side projected onto the stage and simultaneously feared and mocked. The classical soldier by exaggerating it, mocked earthly pomposity. The Christian braggart mocks God. His ability to represent, to reflect the audience's secret desires and act them out is his strength as a dramatic character and his appeal for the audience;

these are the key to his versatility as time passes. We shift his sins subtly to match our own and then we project them largely onto the stage, largely enough so that they become grotesque. Thus he acquires all vices and with a bit more evolution is ready to step into a role as powerful as that of the Vice. His is a role which captures the medieval imagination; the bragging soldier becomes the Vicious Tyrant.

CHAPTER III

VICES AND VICEROYS

I have shown in the previous chapter what happened to the bragging soldier and his on-stage companions when they were enlisted in certain Christian plots of the tenth century. It now remains to follow the soldier into the English Mystery Cycle plays.

One explanation for the blossoming of religious drama in the fourteenth century holds that, following the institution early in the fourteenth century of the Feast of Corpus Christi, the many streams of medieval drama combined to produce the fluid groupings of plays to which I refer here as the English Mystery Cycles, or the Cycle plays.[1] Where they began, who wrote the individual plays, who supervised the organization of plays into cycles, how many there were, how often they were performed, and how well developed the cycles were has been the subject of much interesting study but is, nonetheless, at this remove perhaps impossible to determine; fortunately it is also not relevant to the present discussion.

---

[1] William Tydeman in the opening section of *English Medieval Theatre:1400-1500* (London Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986) provides a summary of the present information concerning the genesis of the Cycle plays, 10-13.

Perhaps because of the size of the *terra incognita* surrounding them, criticism of the English Mystery Cycles has undergone many changes in this century. As an undergraduate I was taught the evolutionary theories of play origin and development, begun by Magnin in the nineteenth century and continued by such distinguished scholars as Sepet, Chambers and Young.[2] The engaging pervasiveness of such evolutionary theories of development can be seen in a popular work such as *The Frank Muir Book: An Irreverent Companion to Social History,* which was reprinted as recently as 1987.[3] The language which Muir uses describes the growth and movement of theatre from sparse liturgical beginnings, to drama presented on the church steps, to raucous plays produced in the market place, exactly as I had learned it thirty years earlier.

The idea that things begin simple and become more complex is beguiling and not easily shaken. In a more academic context, in *The Liturgical Context of Early European Drama,* Salvatore Paterno reinforces the belief that drama grew in an orderly, evolutionary way out of liturgy by demonstrating in detail how dramatic the liturgy is. His conclusion that "the combination of sacred texts and gestures led to performance" could, of course, be just as easily stood on its head.[4]

---

[2] A comprehensive bibliography and invaluable summary of dramatic historiography is presented in Ronald W. Vince's *Ancient and Medieval Theatre: A Historiographical Handbook* (London: Greenwood Press, 1984).

[3]. *The Frank Muir Book: An Irreverent Companion to Social History* (London: Wm Heineman, 1976). Paperback (London: Faber & Faber, 1987), 179-187.

[4] *The Litugical Context of Early European Drama.* Salvatore Paterno. Scripta Humanistica. (Potomac, Maryland: 1989), 150.

Most contemporary scholars, however, have become more cautious about dating manuscripts and assuming a linear development from simpler to more complex drama. In *Traditions of Medieval English Drama* Stanley Kahrl devotes a chapter, "Locating the Plays in Space and Time," to documenting clearly the simultaneous existence of liturgical plays, moralities and Corpus Christi Cycles. Peter Dronke's *Nine Medieval Latin Plays* provides excellent introductory material demonstrating the complexity of influence between texts and locations. Scholars and students have become a good deal more tentative about the exact shape of a play or cycle at any given moment.

Students now are aware of the multitude of materials, including prose sermons, and rhymed narratives, which supplemented the scriptural and liturgical sources of the plays; they are willing to consider the influences that groups as various as guilds, town councils and travelling entertainers might have had on what had been thought to be an exclusive province of the church.

In preparation for this study, I read and considered Anglo-Saxon prose and poetry, the songs of the goliards, selections of medieval sermons and books of advice. More specifically I considered both the rhymed narratives which provide source material for the plays of the Cycles, and the saints lives which parallel the lives of Hrotsvitha's heroines.[5] It is clear that the example of the battles in

---

[5] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend,* trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperges. (New York: Arno Press, 1969).

Prudentius' "Psychomachia," especially, perhaps, the violent stuggle between Long-Suffering and Anger (*Patientia and Ira*), has, like the description of the tyrant in Boethius, had an enormous appeal for the writers of martyr's lives.[6] How much Prudentius and Boethius owe to the bragging soldier of Roman comedy is matter for another study, but it is certain that Long-Suffering in "Psychomachia," who says that she simply waits for Anger to destroy himself, provides an example for the martyrs and tyrants who meet in the literature of the future. The narratives in *Ancrene Wisse*, for example, describe in great detail the martyrdom of the saints Juliana, Margaret and Katherine. The fury of the emperors when confronted with virgins who refuse to acknowledge their power is stressed repeatedly, as is the wisdom of the virgins. The elements of conflict in Hrotsvitha have, if it is possible, enlarged in the two centuries which followed.

By and large, however, the narratives, no matter how gruesome, do not provide the scope for a comedy of evil which is provided when the bragging soldier is given the interaction of drama. His face may be seen, as it was so clearly in Boethius' description, but a narrator directs the reader's emotions and opinions. Without the swaggering, threatening voice and actions, without the unmediated relationship to parasites and rivals which drama provides, the bragging soldier in narrative is unable to develop the ambiguity and the irony of which his dramatic

---

[6] *Prudentius*, trans. H.J. Thompson. (London: Heinemann, 1949) vol. 2. The battle between Long-Suffering and Anger expands to fill lines 109-177 with fury and gore.

brother is capable.[7] What became clear was that it was not in the scope of this work to determine how each source had entered the Mystery Cycles but to show that the soldier had arrived, four centuries later, rearranged, but recognizable still.

What is certain, nonetheless, is that by the end of the fourteenth century the plays of the English Mystery Cycles were common enough in England that when Chaucer remarks on "joly Absolon" who "playeth Herodes upon a scaffold hye,"[8] he can count on his audience recognizing the stereoptypical method of playing the character. Chaucer's readers presumably recognized Herod's, and by extension Absolon's, connections to fancy dress, food, drink, and untrustworthy behaviour; they could also have been expected to laugh at the irony of such a character being squeamish about farting and foul language. Even from so brief a description Herod would appear to have much in common with Hrotsvitha's characters, Sweetie, Sissinius, Antiochus and Calimachus.

A search for the bragging soldier in the texts which we have of the English Mystery Cycles presents similar difficulties to those encountered in the plays of Hrotsvitha: there is rarely a list of Dramatis Personae and, if there is, it is not

---

[7] The difference which dramatic dialogue makes in the portrayal of a tyrant's character may be demonstrated by comparing the presentation of martyrdom in *Dulcitius* and *Sapientia* with the presentation of the deaths of Katherine, Juliana and Margaret as they appear in the early 13th century English versions described and translated by Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson in *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).

[8] F.N. Robinson, ed. "The Miller's Tale," *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2d ed., (Oxford University Press, 1976), 3371 & 3384.

helpful in this context. The characters designated *milites* in the text are unlikely to be bragging soldiers; the person who brags and struts before the audience is no longer simply a simple soldier. However, the techniques which were useful in the examination of Hrotsvitha's plays are useful here also. As in Hrotsvitha's plays, the braggart is more likely to be an Emperor or a Viceroy, a person in high position. The lack of intelligence, lack of awareness and lack of self-consciousness typical of the classical bragging soldier lead, in Christian drama, to an additional failure, a lack of awareness of God, God's will or God's plans. Persons of rank are particularly susceptible to this lack of awareness as they are likely to believe in their own ability to influence events. This leads them naturally into a rivalry with God or His Son. In Hrotsvitha's plays the bragging soldier is, in addition to being in a position of some authority, recognizable because he denies or is unaware of the claim or higher authority of the young lover, Christ, and because he misuses his position accordingly. In the Cycle plays then, the search for the bragging soldier begins in plays in which Christ has a rival who denies His or God's authority.

Given the Biblical text as ultimate source of the Cycle plays, I assumed that conflicts between God and the characters who challenge His authority were likely to be treated in similar ways in similar incidents whether the Chester, N-Town, Wakefield or York Cycle was being observed; therefore, I have chosen to examine possible bragging soldiers in related stories from all of the cycles before proceeding. That is, I shall examine the Creation and Fall as it is played in each of

the cycles before proceeding to all of the stories of Cain and Abel and so on. This procedure makes no allowance for differences in contemporary sources, or times of composition, or methods of presentation but such considerations are not necessarily relevant when what is being observed are the associations of props, persons, actions and language which follow the bragging soldier from one dramatic era to another. In fact, such a generalization clarifies which essentials survive. Some of the characters, like Herod, are much more fully developed than others, who display the vices of the soldier or slave only briefly on the crowded stages of the Mystery Cycles. Nonetheless, the tendency of even minor braggarts to attract the traits of the bragging soldier is instructive because it suggests that whenever figures move into conflicts which deny God, in other words when they become rivals for the love which belongs to God, they begin to collect the attributes of bragging soldiers or their close relatives, the slaves who serve the wrong masters. Here then is an army of bragging soldiers as they appear in a late medieval English setting.

LUCIFER

First of all we would expect the bragging soldier to be a rival and, having seen how that rivalry plays out in Hrotsvitha's Christian dramas, we would also expect that rivalry to manifest itself as a conflict with God and His servants or loved ones. If we are to observe conflicts between the power of God and those who deny or

ignore that power, the place to begin is before the beginning, for in each of the Cycles the first character to deny God's authority is Lucifer.

The Chester Cycle, in Play I, presents Lucifer as at first apparently obedient, though his arrogance hints at an implicit if not an explicit denial.[9] In his first speech he names the nine orders of angels and ends with the boast that he is himself "The principall" (I,63), a comment which leads God to warn Lucifer and Lightbourne to "loke lowely"(I,68). In addition to suggesting that Lucifer be humble, God warns him not to touch the throne, a test of his obedience prefiguring the later test of Adam and Eve. In response, Lucifer says that he understands God's message, but he clearly ignores its implications when he ends with the self-congratulatory statement: "Bearer of lighte thou hast made me" (I,101). God then leaves, or becomes invisible, leaving Lucifer as "governour" in his absence (I,113). Lucifer, like his classical ancestors, is preoccupied, first with his own beauty, then with his position. He imagines that if he sits on God's throne he will have God's wisdom. In the case of both appearance and position he assumes superiority. When the Vertutes and Cherubyn chastise his pride Lucifer responds by insisting upon his beauty and brightness. The Dominaciones affirm Lucifer's beauty, but they counsel wisdom, as if to emphasize that possession of beauty, particularly if

---

[9] I refer to *The Chester Mystery Cycle* 2 vols. ed. P.M. Lumiansky and David Mills. EETS.(1974) throughout this Chapter.

one brags about it, does not necessarily imply possession of wisdom. Egged on by his parasite, Lighteborne, Lucifer is determined to sit on the throne of God. His justification for declaring himself "prince of pride" is that "God himself shines not so sheene" (I,184, 185). As in Hrotsvitha the evil character can be seen as thinking literally of light and ignoring its moral brilliance. Lucifer is already guilty of pride. His pride makes him blind to anyone's wishes but his own. His blindness allows him to be disobedient. Before Lucifer's fall there are hints of the bragging soldier in his part. He emphasizes his appearance rather than his power, confusing the two. He equates pride of position with real accomplishment, thus failing to understand the impotence of evil in the face of God's power. In the Chester Cycle, Lucifer has a parasite to enlarge him; both of them totally ignore the claims of God.

However, in his next appearance in the Chester Cycle in Play II, which deals with the fall of Adam and Eve, the fallen Lucifer's conscious planning, misuse of language, deliberate disguise, his use of a "licourouse" (II,199) woman to further his plans, and his openly stated opposition to God's will, show him as the slave who serves the wrong master. His deceptive intention is clearly stated: "Her to disceave I hoppe I may, /and through her brynge them both away" (II,181). Having fallen, the soldier becomes slave. The difference between the two evil figures is that the soldier is unaware of his own motives and plans; Adam and Eve are not the only beings who gain self-consciousness from their fall. However,

awareness must include awareness of God's power, in addition to awareness of self; if it does not, the result is ugly and painful. Lucifer changes from the "bryghtest angell...or this" (II,165), one who accepted beauty as power, to a creature who chooses to wear the skin of a serpent to carry out his schemes.

The opening plays of each Cycle present the two paths to damnation. While Lucifer in the guise of soldier is unaware of the extent of God's power; in the guise of slave he thinks he can circumvent God's power. Lucifer, when he becomes slave, is slave to his own passions, an illustration of the privative nature of evil. He thinks that he can plan, that he can outwit God. The play, the entire Cycle, is proof of the folly of such ignorance and such slavery.

In the N-Town Cycle the fall of Lucifer is quickly accomplished.[10] Each of Lucifer's three opening lines in the play dealing with the creation of heaven and the angels contains the word "wurchipe" (I,140-42). Lucifer begins by asking why the angels are worshipping God and ends, only two lines later, by ordering the angels instead to worship him. He not only denies God's claim but, by asking whom the other angels worship, Lucifer implies that he does not know, or care, that God has a superior claim. His fourth line gives what he considers an adequate cause for his fellows to worship him: "I am þe wurthyest þat evyr may be" (I,43). In Lucifer's second speech he continues to stress his worth by repeating the word "wurthyer"

---

[10] *Ludus Coventriae or The Plaie Called Corpus Christi*. ed. K.S. Block (EETS ES 120, London, 1922).

(I, 53,54). The only proof he gives for this worth is that he can sit on God's throne above the sun and moon and stars. In all, Lucifer has only thirteen lines, but he convinces the bad angels to join him. Having made their decision, his parasites have four lines to announce their intention to worship at his feet; all of the rebels are then immediately cast out of heaven.

When Lucifer enters, disguised as the serpent, in the second play of this cycle, his initial speech gives no self-conscious hint of plan or identity, or even of disguise. Apparently the authors of this cycle felt that the ancient disguise and plan were so familiar to the audience that they hardly needed explaining; the serpent costume said it all. However, despite his disguise, the servant still invites the courtesan to dine and offers her freedom or the opportunity to be "goddys pere" (II,190). The plot may be familiar to the audience but it is new to Eve. Her perception of Lucifer changes as her own innocence becomes awareness. In her conversation with Adam she says that she has spoken with a "ffayr Aungell" (II,261) and then, when Adam calls attention to their nakedness and shame, Eve calls the serpent a "fals Aungel" (II,238). It is only when God calls upon Eve for an explanation of her conduct that she describes the creature as a "werm with an aungell's face" (II, 302) who bade her eat. God calls attention to the serpent's "wylys wyk" (II,309) and its "fals fablis" (II,310). In this play, as in the opening plays of the Chester Cycle, the fallen devil has more in common with the false servant than with the bragging soldier. He is conscious of his own motives and he

has planned his villainy. At the end of the play the serpent simultaneously reveals that he is the devil and that he is self-conscious. He explains to God that "I ded him all þis velony/ ffor I am ful of gret envy.../ That man xulde leve above þe sky/ Where as sum tyme dwellyd I" (II,319-22). Like the devil in the Chester play, the devil in the N-Town play, having completed his second fall, farts at the audience and then departs. The soldier thinks he is beautiful; the slave is physically grotesque in every way.

In the Wakefield Creation play it is the Cherubyn who introduce Lucifer and emphasize his brightness.[11] This creates an interesting situation in which the angels flatter Lucifer and in God's presence unwittingly set up the rivalry. As so often happens, the Wakefield play is both more creative and, in its embroidery of the text, more psychologically interesting. Deus leaves the acting space before Lucifer appears. As soon as Lucifer enters he asks allegiance of his fellow angels. He thinks that he is "fare and bright" (I, 82) but also claims "grete myght" (I, 85) largely on the basis of his being "thousand fold brighter then is the son" (I,89). Having uttered this revealing pun, he seats himself on God's throne and the bad angels agree that he is fair to behold. Lucifer's entire claim to greatness is his appearance of beauty and might. At this point there is a lacuna in the Wakefield manuscript after which, accompanied by his demons who mourn their fall, Lucifer appears in Hell. The demons express knowledge of their sin but the fallen Lucifer

---

[11] *The Towneley Plays*, ed. A.W. Pollard (EETS ES 71, repr. London 1897)

has only eighteen lines and these describe God's creation of Adam and Eve to make up for the numbers of fallen angels. Lucifer plans the fall of man: "And now ar' thay in paradise;/ bot thens thay shall, if we be wise" (I,267). This hint of planning is the only clue which might suggest that Lucifer makes the same shift from soldier to slave in the Wakefield Cycle, which is observable in the Chester and N-Town plays.

In the York play about the creation and fall of Lucifer, God creates Lucifer "als master and merour of my mighte"(I,34) and gives him "al welth in þoure weledyng" (I,39) as long as he is obedient.[12] The good angels worship God; the evil angels worship themselves. They comment, as in the other cycles, on their own brightness and beauty and power and, in this cycle, they also comment on their "welth" (I,67 & 86). Lucifer has no real power, merely his appearance, the mirror of God's might. He does not understand this, however, and his fall takes place immediately after he says that he will be "lyke unto hym .at es hyeste on heghte" (I,91). This instant fall emphasizes the impotence of Lucifer. If he is disobedient, if he ceases to reflect the image of God, he cannot even conceive of action. Once in Hell Lucifer can only bewail his pain and his lost brightness, though one of his parasites with the typical parasite's interest in his stomach, complains that "All oure fode es but filth" (I,106).

---

[12] *York Plays*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885).

Still moaning, Satan speaks at the opening of the fifth York play, some two hundred and twenty five lines later. Fallen, he complains like the slaves of comedy. In this Cycle, as in the Chester Cycle, the serpent has a soliloquy in which to explain his motives and his plans for mankind before the meeting with Eve. When she meets Lucifer, Eve asks what kind of thing the serpent is; with the candor of complete immorality, he answers "A worme þat wotith wele how/ þat yhe may wirshipped be" (V, 54,55); Satan supposes that her desires for adoration are like his. She is not interested. Only when he suggests that she will be as omniscient as God does Eve succumb to Satan's temptation. The woman differs from the slave because she prefers the possibilities of knowledge to the mere promise of power and influence. In classical comedy, knowledge sets the woman free; in Christian drama mere knowledge, as opposed to wisdom, is the occasion for her fall.

Lucifer appears in more than one guise in the plays which deal with his fall, and with his causing humans to fall. The two faces of the evil characters have proven problematic for critics. In the Cycle plays Lucifer appears first as a Vicious Tyrant or what C.M. Cayley calls the Devil; when Lucifer has fallen, he appears as a Vice. C.M. Cayley making a distinction, similar to the one which I am making in this argument and not unlike the one which we have observed in the plays of Hrotsvitha, says,

> The Vice is neither an ethical nor dramatic derivative of the Devil; nor is he a pendant to that personage, as foil or ironical decoy, or even antagonist. The Devil of the early drama is a mythical character, a fallen archangel, the anthropomorphic Adversary. The Vice, on the other hand, is allegorical, typical of the moral frailty of mankind. Preceding from the concept of the

> Deadly Sins, ultimately focusing them, he dramatizes the evil that springs from within.[13]

It is these two faces of Lucifer which are confusing and which account for the fact that, although according to B. Spivack, the Devil may be "traditionally a humorless figure,"[14] the figure of Lucifer, on the other hand, is not entirely humorless. In the opening plays he has some traits in common with the bragging soldier. One of the constraints on the role of the bragging soldier is that he does not meet his rival. This accounts for Lucifer's sudden shift in behaviour when God leaves the stage. When God is not present Lucifer is usually competing for the loyalty of the other angels and it is in this part of his role that he brags. There is a lack of communication between Lucifer and God: they do not struggle verbally or physically. However, when God is absent, Lucifer denies God's authority and is cast out of heaven. In the Chester play Lucifer and God are on stage acknowledging each other for 125 lines and then God is absent for 85 lines. The Wakefield Lucifer is present but does not emerge as an entity until line 68, nor speak to make his claims until God is gone. His fall is a consequence of his actions, not of God's. In the York Cycle God's position is unclear; he may leave the stage after designating Lucifer as his most powerful lieutenant. If he does not leave the playing space, Lucifer certainly acts as if he has. In the N-Town play

---

[13] C.M. Cayley, ed., *Representative English Comedies*, (New York, 1903-14), li-lii.

[14] B. Spivack. 132.

Lucifer ignores God's claims. The Lucifer of the Fall from Heaven disregards the claim and the omnipotence of his rival but because there is, as yet, no woman, no human soul, no object to claim, the dispute cannot be fully developed in these scenes and he is indeed a "fallen archangel," a "humorless figure." Before his fall, when he is more like the bragging soldier; because he is a reflected character, he may reflect the beauty and brightness of God and his angels; however, being unaware of himself, being aware only of his desires, he does not realize that what appears in the mirror has no power. Lucifer tries to do what God does: usually this involves sitting on God's throne. As soon as he ceases to reflect God's image he ceases to exist; his gestures are hollow and lead at once to his being cast into outer darkness. There, without a shadow or a reflection he must use his wits and become the slave.

Lucifer also exhibits traces of other soldierly characteristics. In the York Cycle he is attracted by wealth. In each of the cycles self-praise, flattery and flatterers exaggerate a character who is shown to have none of the might that he claims. Appearance is all; beauty and brightness are equated with power.

After he has fallen from heaven Lucifer has much in common with the clever slave, who in Christian drama denies God's claims and serves the wrong master. It is, perhaps, easier for a modern reader than for a medieval watcher, to forget that the first snack and the last supper are physical as well as spiritual food. Lucifer uses food to tempt Eve but he has no interest in seducing her for himself, either

physically or morally. She is a tool for the seduction of Adam; Lucifer avoids Adam. He often tells the audience what he is doing, and he tells them why, so that they may admire his cleverness. He uses language, both to explain himself and to confuse Eve. He uses disguise and deception. He moves from the empty arrogance of the bragging soldier to the envious and devious pride of the clever slave.

The creators of these plays, of course, were not free to create works of fiction but depended directly or indirectly on Biblical and patristic sources. The brightness of Lucifer before his fall, regardless of a misunderstanding of the texts, is traceable to Biblical sources.[15] The subtlety of the serpent, its conversation with Eve alone, its major argument and its eating of dust are in Genesis 3. The existence of such traits in the sources is not, I think, so much an argument against my thesis as an explanation of it. To characters in the sources were attracted other characteristics traditionally associated with stock characters. Thus the reference to brightness is exaggerated into pride of appearance and the reference to falling suggests great position and in the Middle Ages great position implies both military and political power. Lucifer falls from bragging soldier to clever slave. The subtlety and disguise of the serpent attract the characteristics of language and self-

---

[15] Lumiansky and Mills discuss this succinctly in their notes to *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, vol. II, 8.

consciousness associated with the clever slave, or vice-versa (no pun intended), while the interest in the courtesan and the use of food remain. The interaction between religious writing, which used metaphor from daily life, and secular writing or performance, which used religious sources, must have been continuous over centuries until Lucifer steps before us transformed but not unrecognizable.

CAIN

If Lucifer is the first rebel, Cain is the second. The language used to tell the story of Adam and Eve does not suggest that they are cast from Eden because they rebel; they fall; perhaps they are pushed. Their son, Cain, is more problematic. Cain represents one way of dealing with the human condition after the fall.

The Chester play about Cain and Abel opens with a scene in which Adam and Eve both instruct their sons concerning past history and a proper relationship with God. Like Lucifer in the same cycle, Cain promises obedience; he tells his mother that he will till the ground as Adam has instructed and that he will sacrifice to God. Yet as soon as Adam and Eve leave the stage Cain declares, "for cleane corne, by my faye, of mee gettest thou nought" (II, 543-44). There is neither bragging nor interest in appearance in this Cain; there is also no wit. He is extravagantly selfish and envious. If he has classical forbears who challenged authority as he does they were very miserly and truculent. In his relationship to the generosity and love of his family and his God his behaviour is more like that of the classical 'old man,' pimp, or banker, all of which he is metaphorically. Although the play ends with an

unrepentant Cain extending his curse to the audience, the impression which remains with the audience is the tragic one of Adam and Eve mourning the loss of both of their sons. Cain in this cycle, like the fallen Lucifer, is not a bragging soldier.

The N-Town Cain announces to Abel, in his first speech, that he cares not "an hawe" to see his father Adam let alone listen to his counsel. This Cain clearly rejects authority. Although he grudgingly listens to Adam he says he'd rather "gon hom well ffor to dyne" (3. 52). Cain then listens to Abel's prayer and declares that his brother is a fool. Cain proposes, "I more wysly xal werke þis stownde/ to tythe þe werst" (3, 96,97). What Cain and Abel quarrel about is cleverness and the proper interpretation of the term 'tithe.' The argument and stress on language interpretation is a reminder of the clever slave's insistence on language; in the N-Town struggle between the two brothers we clearly see the servants of two different masters in competition.

The Wakefield play about the killing of Abel, opens with Garcio shouting the audience to silence, threatening force, and boasting of his master's bad temper: "Begyn he with you for to stryfe,/ I certis, then mon ye never thryfe" (II, 17,18). The creation of a parasite, a character free of restrictions because he is not in the Biblical source, radically changes the character of the Wakefield Cain. Garcio, having quieted the audience, describes himself and Cain; Cain, when he enters, is entirely intent on his task, his stubborn animals and his misery. When Garcio

reappears Cain accuses him of being the cause of the animals' stubbornness because they have not been properly fed. At Garcio's cheeky answer Cain hits the boy and offers to fight. The scene is pure folk drama slapstick, the sort of physical knocking about that makes entertainment as various as Punch and Judy or Roadrunner popular. In this scene the allegorical demonstration of will out of control is combined with an all too familiar literal scene of domestic or street violence; Cain acts out the bragging soldier's violent impulses and yet the audience knows, at least in part, that he is impotent. Punch and Wile E. Coyote will not prevail; Judy and Roadrunner, like all good servants, will rise again.

Once Cain is provided with a slave or parasite, the meager information of the Biblical source takes on a life of its own. Abel enters the jangling scene as doomed as a straightman. In this play it is not Adam and Eve, nor an Angel, who gives the instructions concerning proper sacrifice. It is Abel. Though Cain may be willing to leave his plow to fight the insubordinate Garcio, he is not willing to waste his time going with Abel to make a thanksgiving sacrifice to an invisible, or distant God. The characters of Cain and Abel, and their rivalry, are quickly and clearly established; the conflict is inevitable. Cain's greed and bad temper, selfishness and arrogance, and his refusal to recognize any authority but his own, are traits of the bragging soldier. The ability of the bragging soldier to kill his good competitors had developed by the tenth century. His hungry, cheeky slave speaking to the audience and advertising that "cold rost is at my masteres hame" (II, 421) or

longing for "a draghte of drynke" (II,429) has transferred his allegiance from the young lover to the soldier but is otherwise unchanged since Plautus.

At the end of this sinister play, Garcio attempts to make light of his master's curse by passing it along to the audience. The hapless slave is reminded by Cain that, having killed once, a murderer has little to lose by killing again. Thus the two exit together, Cain certain of his place in hell, the boy doomed to obey an oppressive master. As Hrotsvitha demonstrates, Christian drama does not allow unrepentant bragging soldiers or slaves who continue to serve the wrong masters any possibility of reconciliation.

The York play concerning the sacrifice of Cain and Abel opens with an Angel instructing Cain and Abel on the subject of tithes. Abel willingly receives this news. Cain is almost speechless, capable only of exclamations and rhetorical questions. The lines containing the sacrifice and the murder are missing from this manuscript but, when the text resumes, Cain is inviting his servant to drink. When the Angel reappears, asking for Abel, Cain is not only truculent concerning Abel's whereabouts, he apparently hits the Angel. The Angel mutters rather unangelically, "God hais sent the his malyson,/ And inwardly I geve the myne" (VII, 90,91). Cursed Cain curses the audience and makes his exit.

All of these Cains challenge authority or, in the terms used to describe the bragging soldier's actions in Hrotsvitha, they deny the claims of God, wishing to keep their wealth, and they are blind to any but their own desires. God is Cain's

rival, wanting a part of Cain's crops. Abel is the bearer of the bad news and must be destroyed if Cain is to continue denying God's claim. The plays are structured to emphasize the struggle between the brothers and to lead to the violent climax. The Cains of Chester and N-Town are rather more miserly than martial. However, the Wakefield Cain and perhaps the York one, presented with a clever slave of their own, move towards the comic bragging soldier. The Wakefield Cain out-talks Abel two hundred lines to seventy-four before he kills him. Garcio adds further lines to his master's stature. The Wakefield Cain also out-talks God.

Cain has the bragging soldier's limited range of emotion. Perhaps because Cain has only the unco-operative earth and a limited family as target, perhaps because Abel is less the object of the conflict than an example which makes Cain look like the ungrateful person he is, perhaps because the conflict is focused on principles of property ownership rather than on power over people, Cain's fury often expresses itself as what I have called truculence. The family relationships are dictated and limited by the source material. Small wonder that the Wakefield and York plays become more vital when Cain is given a servant on whom to vent his spleen.

HEROD

There are four potential bragging soldiers associated with the various Nativity plays. Herod appears at length in each cycle and I will discuss him first in each case. Octavianus, or Augustus Caesar, appears at some length in the Chester and

Wakefield cycles. The latter cycle also contains a Pharaoh with characteristics of a bragging soldier whom it is convenient, to discuss with this group. The Chester cycle introduces an additional character from the Old Testament, one who is a precursor of the Nativity plays, and this is Balaak. I will discuss each of these rulers in the context of the cycle in which he appears.

The Herod of the Chester cycle does not appear until after Christ's birth. The shepherds have come and gone and, in the play about the Magi, the three kings are searching for a newly-born king when they encounter Herod's messenger. The messenger cautions them against speaking of a child born to be king of the Jews, "For if kinge Herode here you soe saye,/ he would goe wood, by my faye,/ and flye out of his skynne" (VIII, 134-36). The third king repeats his determination to seek and worship a king "so nere," (VIII,137); the messenger repeats his warning. Thus, before Herod appears, his fury is anticipated and contrasted with the splendour of his palace and costume[16]. The messenger then addresses Herod, calling him "noble kinge and worthy conqueroure,/crowned in goulde, sitting on hye" (VIII, 145-46). The messenger's manifest nervousness leads him to an obsequious eight line introduction of the three kings during which he carefully avoids the object of the visitors' quest but emphasizes Herod's nobility, worth, wealth, and power. The messenger also wishes for Herod the blessing of Mahound, a blessing clearly, if anachronistically, marking Herod as a pagan.

---

[16] The Early Banns challenge the Mercers to deck the carriage "With sondry cullors...of velvit, satten, and damaske fyne,/taffyta, sersnett or poppyngee grene."

Herod's behaviour is controlled at first. The first two kings present their compliments in a courtly French to which Herod also replies in courtly French. However, when the third king announces a search for a "roy de celi et terre" (VIII, 160) courtliness flees and Herod does indeed "goe wood."

His language reflects his frenzy. A similar rhyme is continued through the next sixteen lines, modulating from "sayne" (VIII, 161) through such sounds as keene, seene, teene and towne to "adowne" (VIII, 176). The alliteration in the lines increases until he quite regularly repeats a consonant sound four times in an eight or nine syllable line like "I weld this world withouten weene"(VIII, 173). His hubris grows in proportion to his language. He claims to master kings, then devils, and indeed, the moon, sun and elements. This certainly is the language of the bragging soldier. The stage directions indicate that he flails about with his staff, sign of his authority, perhaps throwing it into the air as he speaks. Even without knowledge of the relative unimportance of Herod in the great Roman scheme of things it must be clear to an audience that he exaggerates. His claim to rule the elements assures that the audience understands Herod's arrogance and also his inability to implement his boasting. When the three kings reiterate their claim and their question – after listening to fifty two lines of frenzy – Herod calls in expert opinion. The doctor begins by assuring Herod that "noe prophets before would/ write anything your hart to could/ or your right to denye" (VIII, 246-68). This retroactive obsequiousness is followed by a certain terror as the doctor begs Herod

to hear the truth patiently without blaming the messenger. When the doctor has reported Jacob's prophecy that the

> realme of Juda and eke the regaltye
> from that generation never taken should bee
> untill he were come that most mightye is,
> sent from the Father, kinge of heavenly blys (VIII, 272-275)

and when the doctor has pointed out the inevitable consequences, Herod again becomes violent. Flailing about with his sword, swearing by Mahound and accusing Jacob of being senile when he made the prophecy, Herod is emotionally, physically and logically out of control. The doctor perseveres; Herod finally flings his sword to the ground and orders slaughter.

His description of the carnage he intends requires him to stretch his speech to twelve and fourteen syllable lines. Even these lines are not long enough when he swears that, "I shall hewe that harlott with my bright brond so keene/ into peeces smale" (VIII, 335-36). He must run on breathlessly into the next line. Nonetheless, after each outburst, like a person probing a wound, he asks the doctor whether there are more prophecies. Thus his anger increases through the usual bragging soldier's range from fury to more and most furious until, flinging his arms about, he threatens to destroy the doctor's books and, in a frenzy of impotence, does break his own sword. Finally Herod bids the three kings go to see whether the prophecies are fulfilled and come back for dinner. As soon as the

three kings leave, Herod invokes the devil and admits that "for wrath I am nere wood" (VIII, 385). Waving his staff about he contemplates slaying the three kings when they return and plans his attack on the boy who is a threat to his throne. Herod, having run the gamut of his emotions, regains control when the kings who seek the true master are no longer present. The play ends with Herod drinking to cheer himself.

The play depends on contrasts and ironies. Herod uses all of his bragging to contest the calm fact of a rival. There are in Herod's physical swaggering many parallels with the clowning actions of the Boy Bishop, a reversal of power celebrated in many institutions on Innocents' Day, a day quite naturally connected with the acts of Herod, and with plays dealing with Herod.[17] The young choristers also were reputed to misuse their power and lose control. Herod's lack of control is emphasized by contrasting his polite welcome with his dismay at the news the kings bring, by contrasting his willingness to listen to expert opinion and his rejection of the opinion when it is not agreeable. Herod rejects the food of the spirit, but drowns himself in drink and plans a dinner at which he will betray the kings. The power of the word to outlive the sword is vividly portrayed but the

---

[17] *Medieval Drama*, David Bevington.(Houghton Mifflin,Boston, 1975), 53. Edward F. Rimbault's Introduction to *Two Sermons Preached by the Boy Bishop at St. Paul's Temp. Henry VIII, and at Gloucester, Temp. Mary* ed. by John Gough Nicols, F.S.A. (London, The Camden Society, 1865) provides a wealth of documentation concerning the activities of The Feast of Innocents or the Festival of the Boy Bishop, v-xxxii.

word which has power is not the bombast of arrogance but the prophecy of a rival.

The tenth play in the Chester cycle, that depicting the killing of the Innocents, opens with a forty-eight line speech by Herod. Again Herod makes extravagant claims about his control of everyone in his realm. His own words betray his boast, however, when he complains that the three kings "by another way have taken ther flight" (X, 19). In vengeance he swears that

> that boye, by God almight,
> shall be slayne soone in your sight,
> and though it be agaynst the right-
> a thousand for his sake (X, 21-24).

He apparently feels justified in ordering the death of his rival while, at the same time, acknowledging that the slaying of so many innocent children is not right. His speech is a curious combination of self-pity and rant. There is more chill in Herod's speeches at the beginning of this Chester play which depicts the murder of the Innocents than in his ranting when he meets the Magi earlier in the cycle. In this later play he calmly tells Preco that although he knows it is not right he will have a thousand children slain. In his speech to the soldiers he pronounces a death sentence on "all knave-children in this contree" (X, 119).

Herod has several allies in this play. His servant is Preco, whom he quite affectionately calls "prettye Pratte, my messingere" (X,41). Preco declares himself

a running slave of classic proportions, sounding much like a precursor of Prospero's Ariel as he promises "to doe your hest I am bowne,/ lightly to leape over dale and downe/ and speed if I were there" (X, 50-52). Preco wakes the soldiers summoned by Herod and then hastens to announce their arrival before their master. Like Ariel, like all slaves, he is paid for his services. In addition a doctor abets Herod's decision, swearing, in a phrase that marks his parasitic status, by his ability to eat bread (X, 127). Although Herod's soldiers express reluctance to "slay a shitten arsed shrewe" (X, 157) feeling that it is scarcely honourable, they change their minds when Herod encourages them by assuring them that they are not to kill "on nor two/...but a thousand and yett moo" (X,169,171). These are numbers which Pyrgopolynices would certainly approve. Convinced by Herod's logic that slaying enough children will make their deed heroic, the soldiers take on the language of their master and brag about their previous conquests. The second soldier actually claims to have slain ten thousand in one day while fighting the Scots.

The Chester scene with the women of Bethlehem is a bizarre mixture of physical comedy, low language and pathos. The second soldier, in particular, repeats his threat to have the babies hop upon his spear end; meanwhile the women threaten, swear, and hit the soldiers with whatever materials are at hand. The soldiers, and Herod himself, suggest that the women are prostitutes by calling them "queanes" (X, 290), or "dame Parnell" (X, 337). Herod calls his son's wet nurse

"hoore" (X,397). The women are not sparing with their insults either. These are not without sexual allusion to the soldiers' mistresses but more often refer to the soldiers' class or bravery. The soldier and the true lover, are always rivals and, we have seen, women are usually the objects, whether real or symbolic, of their rivalry. Inevitably babies and children, the offspring of the rivals, become objects in the struggle too. If the children belong to the true lover their destruction is, in several ways, a denial of his power. Thus the gruesome scenes, however comic or tragic, play out the basic rivalry.

The final mourner in the Chester play is Herod. His own son is among the victims. Like Lucifer when he has fallen, Herod, when he knows that he is responsible for his own son's death, becomes fatalistic.

> I have donne so much woo
>
> and never good sythe I might goo;
>
> therefore I se nowe comming my foe
>
> to fetch me to hell (X, 426-29).

Indeed, as soon as he predicts his end, a demon appears to carry him to hell.[18]

---

[18] David Staines in "To Out - Herod Herod: The Development of a Dramatic Character". *Comparative Drama*.X (1976), 29 - 53 sees this ending as creating a tragic figure rather than a comic Herod for the Chester Cycle. However, as is the case in the Octavianus and the Balaam episodes, which I discuss next, this Herod owes something to the troubled Herod of the *Legenda Aurea* and *The Stanzaic Life* who enumerates the reasons for his concern about Christ because he is troubled about the loyalty of his own sons. These sources also dwell on the final illness of Herod the Great. The slaughter of the Innocents shows signs of having the comic lines 305 - 336 as an earlier version of the play to which were added lines 337 - 376 in which reference to the death of Herod's son adds solemnity, reference to the authority of the sources and a certain fitting nemesis. The addition of this section leads Herod to confess that "I have donne so much woo" (X,426)

While Herod appears in two of the Chester Nativity plays, both connected to the adoration of the Magi, Play VI of that Cycle, contains an even greater earthly ruler, Octavianus, who appears both before and after the scene of the Nativity. In this play Octavianus has all the attributes of a bragging soldier: a herald makes way for him; his appearance, his power and his achievements are described; but just when he might be expected to abuse his power, he surprises us. Octavianus boasts of power to improve the lives of his subjects, to show wisdom in council, to give protection to all, even frail women. One of his senators says, "soe loved a lord, veramente, was never in this cytte" (VI, 303-04). Octavianus' military and political might has a purpose. He says, "Syth I was soverayne, warre cleare can cease" (VI, 237). This emperor can accept the Sibyl's prophecy and when she tells him "sicker...borne ys hee/ that passeth thee of postee" (VI, 645,46) he marvels and, having heard the angels, he calls himself Christ's subject. He accepts the claims of God and is not a rival. On the other hand, in addition to offering Preco a woman as a reward for carrying notice of the head tax to all the Empire, Octavianus jokes and can accept jokes from his messenger about which of them is more apt to hang.

Parallels and contrasts are woven into the structure of the Chester Cycle. In the Nativity story, as it was finally compiled, scenes depicting the wealthy and

---

before the Demon appears to carry him off. I would suggest that the tragic aspects of this Herod are late additions, perhaps Protestant, certainly puritan efforts to tone down the ebulliant black comedy of the medieval figure.

powerful alternate with scenes depicting the ordinary people. Play VI begins with Gabriel's announcement and shows the result of this in the lives of Mary and Joseph; Octavianus announces his imposition of a tax and is told of Christ's impending birth; the scenes of Christ's birth follow; the play concludes with Octavianus' vision of Christ's Nativity and his reaction to it. Play VII belongs to the shepherds. Play VIII presents the three kings and Herod; in Play IX the kings present their gifts to an innocent baby; and in Play X Herod slaughters the innocents.

Within this scheme of contrasts is a further contrast: the contrast of a bragging ruler with a ruler who recognizes a responsibility to God and his people. Each ruler has one or more parasites. Each is presented with a rival. One assaults women and children; the other protects them. In the Herod scenes the violence is exaggerated with a stress on numbers. The food and wine are excesses and escapes. Octavianus, on the other hand, listens to his advisers, one of whom is the Sibyl, without bullying them. He is, with no difficulty, converted by his vision of "a mayden bright,/ a yonge chylde in her armes clight" (VI, 653). The placement of these plays and the assignment of the contrasted characteristics of the bragging soldier emphasize the difference between authority well used and power abused.

Octavianus as he is depicted in the Chester cycle is unusual and in the context of this thesis raises a question which must be answered. How can a figure who is provided with many of the attributes of a bragging soldier not be a bragging

soldier? Octavianus is introduced in Stanza 23 and the language used by his herald, his parasite and himself is, until stanza 39, fairly typical of the bragging soldier. In addition to threatening the audience and speaking in lines heavy with alliteration, Octavianus is a pagan, worshipping Mahounde, or at any rate having a herald who swears by Mahounde (VI, 274); furthermore, in a typically bawdy exchange with his impertinent servant, Octavianus offers the servant a woman as a reward (VI 274 - 296).

Because the historical Octavianus was responsible for Herod's appointment, and because Herod as he appears in the Biblical sources is easily seen as a tyrant, Octavianus too is usually regarded as evil.[19] He certainly appears villainous in the Wakefield cycle. But in Stanza 41 of the Chester cycle when the Senators bring news that the people of Rome wish "to honour thee as God with blys" (IV, 306), Octavianus declares that "folye yt were by manye a waye/ such soveraygntye for to assaye"(IV, 317 - 318). He consults the Sibyl and, following his vision of the Nativity and the Sibyl's prophesy, Octavianus declares it proper to worship the Christ child. This is not the behaviour of a bragging soldier.

In the Early Banns of the Chester Cycle, which are in the form of a descriptive exhortation to the guild members to prepare for the forthcoming presentation, Octavianus is characterized as "so cruell and kene." Even in the Late Banns, with their dignified appeals to authority, people were led to expect that "Octavian the

---

[19] *The Chester Mystery Cycle*. vol.II, 84.

Emperor...coulde not well alowe/ the prophesye of Auncient Sibell the sage."[20] Neither of these accounts matches well with the Octavianus who appears in the Chester Cycle in its present form. However, this version was copied some years after the last performance of the Cycle. The references in the Banns, and the fact that tryrannical attributes are still attached to him there, might suggest that, despite the benevolent aspects which appear in the version of the Cycle which we now have, in an earlier version of the play Octavianus was less charming. It appears that an attempt was made to change Octavianus' character by grafting onto a previous version of the play stanzas 39 - 48 and 84 - 90, which are based on a non-dramatic source or sources, such as the *Legenda Aurea* and the *Stanzaic Life*, which cast Octavianus as a benevolent ruler converted by the Sybil's vision.[21] (In these sources even Herod is scarcely villainous: reasons are given for his worries about who will succeed him, and his struggles with his sons loom larger than his conflict with the infant Christ.) Lumiansky and Mills note at several points during the first sixteen stanzas of the play about Octavianus that the text is confusing or corrupt. The later stanzas are, indeed, missing from the MSS designated A and R. Both in this play and in the Balaam, Balak incidents, Lumiansky and Mills suggest that the copyists may not have distinguished between two alternative versions of

---

[20] Lumiansky and Mills place the probable date of the Early Banns as early as 1505 - 1521, while the Late Banns which are "markedly defensive" may have been as late as 1572 when there was strong opposition to the performance (190 - 192).

[21] *The Chester Mystery Cycle*. vol. II 78

the play but tried to accommodate both.[22] Clearly the attempt to change Octavianus' part to conform to material from accepted local authorities was not easily accomplished and, if the evidence of the Banns is any guide, the part may have been changed only for the final two performances with their attendant Protestant restrictions. Perhaps, because the Herod of the Chester Nativity plays is arguably the most violent figure in the Chester Cycle, the author of Play IV chose to provide for the audience a clear lesson about morality and about the authority of rulers. Herod's violence is punished by death but there are wise rulers like the sympathetic Octavianus. Given the difficult times when the Chester Cycle was given its final performances – the changing theology, and the weakened monarchy – the creators of this play may well have seen the advantage of presenting, as an antidote to the disorder invited by Herod, a ruler who represented an othodox attitude to religion and who received his just reward. In any case it is clear that the authority who attempts to usurp the position of his rival becomes, in his impotence, a figure of blackest humour, while the ruler who embraces his morally superior rival increases in dignity. It is also clear that the bragging soldier may be taught new lessons but his old habits are not easily stamped out.

The Chester plays surrounding the Nativity are preceeded by another play which forms a link between the Old and New Testament and provides also a

---

[22] Lumiansky and Mills. *The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents.* University of North Carolina Press. (Chapel Hill. 1983), 16.

precursor of Herod. The play includes both a depiction of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments and the story of Balaam and Balaak. At the beginning of the second of these stories, Balaak enters and speaks for seventy-two lines during which he complains of the power of Israel. He says, "I am soe wrath I would not wond/ to slea them everye wight" (V.98,99). Like Herod, he waves his sword about while he calls on "all the powers infernall" to help him destroy the people who threaten his control of Moab (V,134). He sends a soldier to fetch Balaam and offers great rewards if Balaam will curse the Israelites. God and his messengers, including the ass which Balaam rides, speak to Balaam but not to Balaak. Balaam knows that he owes to God his power to foretell and he explains this to Balaak's messenger, "for I may have noe power/ but yf that Godes will were" (V,181-82). However, like Hrotsvitha's Fortunatus, he cannot resist the money offered by a bragging soldier. As Balaak cries out in dismay Balaam sees the growth and prosperity of Israel; Balaam blesses the Israelites and foretells Christ's birth. Like a slave in Plautus, however, Balaam knows when he has gone as far as possible. Ultimately, like Fortunatus, Balaam uses women, in this case to betray and weaken the sons of Israel and so to provide a plan which serves Balaak's needs. Thus Balaam obeys the words of God but subverts the spirit, proving himself an ingenious servant of the wrong master.[23] This was the last play on the first day of

[23] Lumiansky and Mills in their Introduction note that Play V becomes an Advent Play in the manuscripts of the Chester cycle which eliminate the Moabite women seducing the Israelites but that all of the versions contain Balaam's prophecy. The presence of a bragging soldier who behaves in the usual way and has the usual associates provides an

the Chester presentation and forms a fitting link to the Nativity play which began the second day.

In the N-Town Cycle, Herod first appears in the eighteenth play, which presents the Adoration of the Magi. He enters at the beginning of the play and introduces himself. He concentrates on his appearance and might. There is "non lofflyere," he says, and "I am the comelyeste kynge clad in gleterynge golde;" he is also "þe semelyeste syre þat may bestryde a stede" (18: 4,9,10). There is no reason to suppose that this Herod was not as sumptuously arrayed in velvet, satin, damask and taffeta as the Chester Herod but when imagining the Herods of any of the cycles it should also be noted that some contemporary illustrations show Herod wearing the cap and bells of fool. If so, the contrast between his perception and the audience's would have been most humorous.[24] While this self-centred popinjay briefly leaves the stage the three kings introduce themselves and explain their purpose. Herod returns apparently attired in court gowns and still describing his might and his clothing. He introduces the fact that he has heard that a "baron bad/ In bedde (?)[sic] is born" (18:86,87). He calls his steward to go out and see whether he hears any news to "greve þe kynge" (18:100). The steward comes at once upon the three kings and conducts them to Herod. Before he hears a word

---

Advent spirit even in the four versions which retain the advice concerning the Moabite women. Balaak's use of the Moabite women provides a nice parallel to Herod's use of the women of Bethlehem. (Vol. 2, p.xxviii)

[24] M.D. Anderson, *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches* (Cambridge University Press, 1963), plates 11a - 11e.

from the kings, Herod tells the audience that if "they rave/ or waxyn wood" he will their "hedys cleve/ And schedyn here blood" (18:145-46 & 150). Here, indeed, is gratuitous violence and displaced aggression. When the kings have explained their quest Herod describes his position and possessions to them and sends them to find the baby. He offers them a rich reward if they will return and tell of their experiences. As soon as the kings are off the stage Herod explodes, "A Fy, Fy on talys þat I have ben tolde" (18:217). He threatens to kill the kings if they return.

The adoration of the kings and the purification in the temple follow, and then, in the twentieth play, Herod returns accompanied by his soldiers and his steward. He and the steward enter together. The steward reports the flight of the kings. Herod is so self centred that he describes himself first, "I ryde on my rowel rych in my regne," before he considers his bloody revenge (20:9). He appears already to have consulted his experts for he knows that the baby will be "jhesu" but in this cycle no elders appear on stage to counsel him. Herod orders his soldiers to slaughter all two year olds. The soldiers in this play, like the functionaries in Hrotsvitha, exhibit not the slightest qualms about their mission, and hurry off to do Herod's bidding. When Mary and Joseph have fled to Egypt the soldiers and women with their dead babies enter. The soldiers announce to Herod that they have carried out his orders and he pays them with steeds, lands and people. They feast. Suddenly Mors appears to carry off the king. Death and the devil carry off the bragging and feasting king with his bloodthirsty soldiers.

This Herod's alliteration takes on even more heroic proportions than that of the Chester Herod. He often continues his alliteration over two lines, as in "ther is no lord of lond in lordchep to my lyche/ non lofflyere non lofsummere evyr lastyng is my lay"(18: 3,4). He is ten times given all or most of the thirteen line stanza which begins with eight long alliterated and rhymed lines and ends with five shorter rhymed lines. In these he is at least fourteen times given the same alliteration for two lines at a time. Several of the lines in these stanzas have erasures and changes and so it is possible that even more lines may originally have conformed to the two line 'super alliteration' pattern. One of the stanzas is disrupted and two others have very short lines and less chance for alliteration. Thus in his opening stanza and in the four stanzas uttered when he is most angry, twelve lines carry extra repetitive power. This technique which occurs equally in both Play 18 and Play 20 is, therefore, characteristic of the concept of Herod rather than of a play. Lucifer repeats words and sounds over several lines but he does not approach the richness of alliteration given to Herod's raging. When Mors arrives to collect Herod at the conclusion of Play 20, his first speech begins with a double line alliteration: "Ow I herde a page make preysyng of pride/ all prynces he passyth he wenyth of powste" (20: 168, 169); it is as if alliteration were a disease which he had caught from Herod but he does not continue the technique further; he has no need to. Mors who has the power of one "sent fro god" (20: 181), rarely repeats the initial sound four times in the line, whereas Herod in his ranting rarely misses. In the three

thirteen line stanzas following the slaughter the alliteration is normal. Herod does not use this the 'super alliteration' when he is relaxing at dinner or giving orders to his soldiers. When he is rewarding his men and feasting, Herod is calm and sure of himself. The writers or actors of this cycle capitalized on the capabilities of the extra repetition of sound to create a language which expresses humour and impotent rage simultaneously.

In the Wakefield cycle, as in the N-Town cycle, Herod introduces himself. He displays, as he does so, many of the characteristics the audience expects from the bragging despot. He does not have a parasite in this opening; so he must introduce himself. He does this at length. As I noted in the previous chapter the classical bragging soldier had already dropped his taciturn habit by Hrotsvitha's time. Over the next three hundred years he becomes positively verbose, taking over the talkative habit of the clever slave. The dramatic reasons for this are not hard to find. The lover is absent. He cannot be made to fear the soldier. He is too powerful to fear the soldier; he scarcely notices him. Therefore, the audience must focus on the soldier; the text must involve the people in the audience and engender their fear without the aid of the young lover's or the courtesan's fearful jabbering to lead them on. That the good or wise characters in the plays do not fear the soldier illustrates the the theological lesson which is also clear: in the eternal scheme the bragging soldier is beneath notice. Evil is beneath notice, is laughable because it is impotent, unable to change God's plans no matter how hard it struts and strives. The only ones who truly fear the soldier are the soldier, his weak and

evil associates, and the elements of the audience which recognize the soldier's evil in themselves. The clever slave talked a great deal to create illusion; now, with the young lover, and his friends too, by and large, expressing no fear of the soldier, the soldier must shoulder the responsibility of creating the illusion of his greatness and his fearfulness. He talks to convince himself. This is part of his humour and part of his evil.

His opening speech in the fourteenth play, which includes the offering of the Magi, is sixty-four lines long. Herod begins by threatening death to anyone in the audience who makes a noise and then he makes the bragging soldier's arrogant claim. In this case he tells the audience that he rules the world: "Lord am I of every land,/ Of toure and towne, of se and sand" (XIV, 7,8). In the third stanza he implies that he is equal to "mahowne" by announcing that all people alive shall bow to the two of them. Thus Herod simultaneously commits a sort of hubris and, like the other Herods, puts himself squarely in the pagan camp, when he says that in his enmity to God, "The feynd, if he were my fo,/ I shuld hym fell" (XIV, 23,24). In the sixth stanza he insists on his physical attractiveness and power. Herod's denial of God goes beyond simply swearing by "Mahowne." In stanza ten he sends out his messenger to see whether there are any people who do not believe in "mahowne most myghty,/ Our god so fre" (XIV, 57,58). He intends to impose his beliefs. Thus Herod's pride and rivalry are clearly established.

As the messenger, hastening to obey his master, leaves the stage, the kings one at a time enter and meet with their fellow seekers. When the kings have fully introduced themselves, discussed the star, and reviewed the prophecies, they exit; Herod and his messenger return. Herod begins by scolding the messenger for his long absence. It is not clear where the messenger has been while the kings were discussing their mission; however, when Herod angrily calls for news, the messenger says that he has met three kings and the messenger appears to have overheard the conversation of the kings, because later, when he introduces them to Herod, he mentions their home countries.

Herod's utterance abruptly switches from exclamation to threat or question as he berates the messenger and then expresses shock at the tidings the messenger brings. Then although he claims that persons who believe that the stars predict events are mad he also admits that his "wytt is all away" at the news (XIV, 299). Instead of the long resounding lines of the N-Town Herod, this Herod is often practically incoherent. "Alas," "Fy" and the "dewyll" punctuate his broken sentences. Finally in the twelfth stanza of his rage he gathers himself sufficiently to send the messenger after the kings.

As if to prove that Herod is capable of coherent speech and to provide the contrasts which, as the other cycles demonstrate, are effective in creating a more terrifying, a more duplicitous character. In his total self-absorption he manages to be two-faced without ever seeming to plan his duplicity. He is given three stanzas

of courtly language with which to greet the three kings. In stanza 61, 62, and 63, Herod pays his messenger and welcomes his guests. He lapses briefly into exclamation and question but pulls himself together to instruct his doctors to search the scriptures. The doctors review the prophecies; after the first prophecy, that from Isaiah, Herod cries out but gathers himself to ask where the child shall be born; when the doctors quote Micah, Herod threatens them with violence and curses them. He then indulges in two stanzas of self-pity before sending the three kings to seek the truth of the prophecies.

The Wakefield Herod gets no chance to explain his intention to trap the kings. It is implied in his final order to the kings when he asks them to return with news and allow him to do "Some worship [to]...that king" (XVI, 488). This text, however, does not diverge significantly from its New Testament source so that whether it is said ironically, or with a sly, "Ha, ha," or without any awareness of guile is unclear. In the York play this series of actions is proposed by a courtier, a clever parasite, and is intended to be devious.

Herod does not appear again until after the adoration of the Magi and the flight into Egypt have taken place. When he does reappear in the sixteenth play, he is preceeded by a seventy-nine line flourish from his heraldic parasite.

The stanza used to describe Herod in this play is very like the stanza noted for its heavy alliteration in the N-Town Herod plays. It is a nine line stanza with four long lines and five short ones. The long lines, however, have an internal rhyme and

are, therefore, the equivalent of the N-Town stanzas which occasionally use very short lines. The similarity is increased by the fact that in most cases the alliteration carries through only half of the long line. Under stress Herod occasionally carries the alliteration through both parts of the line (see XVI, 163) but often he fails to repeat sounds at all.

In addition to the claim of kingship over enormous territory and references to Mahoune, the herald also uses the exaggerated numbers which are regular attributes of conversation with or about the bragging soldier. The herald announces, for example, that any treason will be repaid twelve thousand fold. The herald's boast of Herod's greatness includes a long list of countries acknowledging Herod's sovereignty. The list includes places "ffrom paradise to padua" (XVI, 46). Herod's power is so great that "Of hym none can spell/ Bot his cosyn mahowne" (XIV, 53,54). Provided with this sort of parasite the bragging soldier's characteristics are easily distinguished.

The parasite also introduces an element of audience participation which is characteristic particularly of Herod's appearances and may point to the bragging soldier in this manifestation surviving through the centuries in folk drama. Although the herald has warned the audience not to speak of the Christ child, he at once reports to Herod that "They carp of a kyng" (XVI, 78). This gives Herod an excuse to rant and threaten, which he does for sixty-five lines. He begins by speaking of breaking bones and skinning the carcasses and proceeds to threaten to

cleave the audience "small as flesh to pott" (XVI, 99). Not only is it clear where the parasite's allegiance lies, it is also clear what stewing meat he may dine upon.

Herod claims to have the power of life and death throughout the world but he also claims personal physical prowess, saying, "The doughteyest, men me call/ That euer ran with spere" (XVI, 109,110). However, all of his claims are shown to be empty when one of his soldiers reports that the kings have gone home by another route. This Herod too becomes incoherent and blames his soldiers for allowing the kings to escape. As if further to prove his impotence his soldiers argue with him, claiming that there is no danger in the kings. They tell Herod not to threaten them. This does not improve Herod's mood. Once more he is reduced to exclamations and name calling. The soldiers insist upon their bravery saying what they would have done had the kings not gone away suddenly. Herod then dismisses his soldiers and calls for his counsellors, asking them what they know of this king who is to be born. This the counsellors do, and then Herod berates them and sends them away, telling them to throw their books in the water. To redeem themselves the counsellors suggest that all boys under two who live in and around Bethlehem should be slain. This is the sort of violent, useless, and unbookish advice which Herod understands, and he rewards them richly.

The slaughter begins with Herod sending his messenger for his knights; then, when the messenger has the knights assembled, Herod describes their task and offers rewards. The knights go cheerfully. During the exchanges between the

mothers and the soldiers the women call the men traitors and thieves, while the men call the women bawds and whores. The men threaten and the women mourn. Then the soldiers report to Herod that "morderd haue we/ Many thowsandys" (XVI 418,419). They are rewarded and Herod expresses his joy now that his "hart is at easse" (XVI, 469). He feels no guilt for the more than 100,000 who have been slain. Indeed, he claims that his gall has turned to sugar. This Herod has the last word when he, somewhat ironically in the circumstances, advises the audience not to be "to cruell" (XVI, 511) and commits them or himself or everyone to the devil.

In the Wakefield Cycle the group of Nativity plays begins with an Annunciation play, and with Mary's visit to Elizabeth. However, the two plays which precede these, linking the Old Testament to the New, are each dominated by a bragging soldier. The first of these bragging soldier precursors to the Herods who follow depicts the escape from Egypt of Moses and the children of Israel. It begins with Pharaoh introducing himself, and his possessions, and his power. All who do not attend him are threatened with hanging and drawing. His soldiers pledge their protection and warn of the Jews who are multiplying in "gersen" (VIII, 35). The parallels between this and the Herod plays of the Nativity are clear. The attitudes expressed here are familiar to us from the scenes in Hrotsvitha where the Emperor hears of the Christian women who threaten his kingdom. Pharaoh suggests that midwives kill all male children. When Moses

announces that God has sent him to Pharaoh to fetch the children of Israel, Pharaoh, like Herod, threatens, exclaims and questions. As the knights report on the catastrophes which befall Egypt, and as Moses continues his demands, Pharaoh mourns and exclaims. He makes plans to let the Jews go but to catch and punish them later. When he learns that they are gone he promises death and destruction; then gallantly, with his soldiers praying to "mahowne" (VIII, 412), they all ride into the sea.

The next play in this cycle is entitled "Cesar Augustus" and it too begins with the tyrant bragging and calling for silence. He also swears by "mahoune" (IX, 9). He claims to own everything and to have the allegiance of the "lord of euery land" (IX, 21). Like Herod, Caesar Augustus claims to be attractive. "A fayrer cors for to behold,/Is not of bloode & [sic] bone" (IX, 32,33). He calls his counsellors; they advise him to proclaim his power thoughout the land and they also warn him of "a chylde.../ That shall youre force downe fell" (IX, 71, 72). For two stanzas Caesar Augustus exclaims and worries about when this event will occur. His counsellors calm him and advise seeking advice from his cousin "Sirinus." Caesar Augustus sends a messenger to Sirinus and tells the messenger also to listen for news of "that lad where that thou gase" (IX, 114). Sirinus quickly arrives and counsels Caesar Augustus "as ete I brede" to kill any child born to be king (IX, 182). To test the allegiance of the people Sirinus advises Caesar Augustus to have every citizen come in person to pay him both homage and a head tax. The play

ends with the messenger departing to carry out the Caesar's orders. The play suggests what the Chester play might have been like in an earlier period of time.

The three tyrants at the centre of the Wakefield cycle have several common characteristics. Each introduces himself with some grandeur and much exaggeration. None of them is capable of much emotion beyond rage. They react to fear or jealousy by showing indignation and threatening force. Caesar and Herod each mention physical attractiveness but the attractiveness has little to do with attracting wives or courtesans; these bragging soldiers typically are so self-centred that they rarely think of women except as objects, useful as rewards or getting in the way when they display any humanity. The crown or position is the goal for which these bragging soldiers fight their rivals. Each of them is infuriated by, but contemptuous of, the possibility of a rival. Despite their counsellors and soldiers they never clearly see the nature of this rival. Pharaoh, despite Moses' constant reminders that he speaks for God, or acts at God's command, thinks that it is the Jews who are his tricky rivals. Caesar Augustus and Herod both concentrate their fear on a child born to be king. All of them fear and attack the children whom they see as rivals. None of these rulers asks about or shows any more interest in the God whom the plays would have as their real adversary than do the tyrants in Hrotsvitha's plays. Each insists that he associates himself with Mahownde, the wrong master.

Following the play of the shepherds in the York cycle is a short bragging play for Herod and his soldiers. This is followed in turn by the seventeenth play in which the three kings visit Herod asking for information about a new born king of the Jews.[25] In the alternative production of this cycle is also a play in which Herod enters and introduces himself.

Regardless of which plays were presented at York the figure of Herod is not very different from his brothers in other cycles. He claims that the elements and the planets do his bidding and that "Thondres full thrallye by thousands I thrawe when me likes" (XVI, 8). This is the bragging soldier at his best, assuring the audience that

> Lordis and ladis loo luffely me lithes,
> For I am fairer of face and fressher on folde
> (ȝe soth yf I saie sall) seuene and sexti sithis
> .an glorious gulles ȝat gayer [is] ȝan golde.
>
> [brackets from the text. XVI, 16-19].

His soldiers, like good parasites, agree and embellish his power with their threat to punish any who do not heed Herod. The unusual element in this opening scene is that Herod apparently has a son who joins in the soldiers' chorus. Suddenly Herod's luxuriant language disintegrates when his herald begins an announcement.

---

[25] See the note on p. 125 of *The York Plays* concerning the playing of the various parts of the Nativity plays in this cycle.

Before the herald gives a hint of his news Herod churlishly interjects, "Pees! dastard, in þe deuels dispite" (XVII, 74). When the herald continues Herod insults him and orders him to be beaten. Apparently the atmosphere at court is sunny only when Herod sets the agenda. When it is clear that three kings will soon arrive, Herod orders good clothing and manners until the purpose of the kings' visit is clear. Herod asks Mahounde's blessing on the kings when they enter, but he rapidly loses his good manners when he discovers their errand. He is rougher with the kings than are the other Herods. He tells the kings that people will think them crazy to follow a star; he says they rave when they assure him that the child who is born will be king of the Jews. He threatens to have them "bette and boune in bande" (XVII, 136) until one of his courtiers suggests a more devious course of action and Herod joyfully falls in with the plan.

Following the flight of Mary and Joseph into Egypt with the Christ child, Herod once more takes the stage to call for silence and proper respect. Again he swears by "mahounde" (XIX, 15) and claims that he wields great power. Again his courtiers are most obsequious. The messenger arrives with the news that the three kings have departed to their own countries. This Herod is struck almost speechless; he utters short exclamations in short speeches and threatens the messenger. A courtier joins him in blaming the messenger and advises killing all boys "In Bedlem and all aboute" (XIX, 153). When the soldiers have slain the children they report to Herod. He rewards them but asks if they are sure that they

have killed the child he sought. When they explain that they had no token "To knawe þat brothell by" (XIX, 265) Herod realizes that the child may have fled and the soldiers have wasted their effort. The play ends with Herod's distress.

The Pageant of the Shearmen and Taylors from the Coventry cycle also contains scenes with Herod.[26] Herod is preceded by a herald who cries for silence. Herod enters and delivers his thirty line introduction, announcing that he is "The myghttyst conquerowre that eyuer walked on ground!" (XIX, 8) He brandishes his bright sword and claims to create the thunder and lightning. His hubris extends to lofty heights when he says, "For I am ebeyn he thatt made bothe hevin and hell"(486,487). His face and appearance he says are brighter than the noonday sun and people who contemplate him have no need of food nor drink. He sends his messenger off to ensure that no strangers pass through his kingdom without paying for safe passage; he swears by Mahomet that those who try to evade his tax shall be hanged. Here are food, drink and greed all in close proximity with bragging and rivalry. When the three kings arrive the herald announces them.

This Herod is more devious than most and sends the heralds out into Jerusalem to seek information while he himself interrogates the kings. He also controls his fears and temper while he sends the kings to seek the child but he decides to slay them when they return. The adoration of the Magi is accomplished

---

[26] *The Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*. ed. Hardin Craig (EETS ES 87, 2nd ed. London, 1957).

in this play in eighteen lines with a six line preamble. In a further fifty lines the kings sleep, dream and are warned not to return to Herod. Clearly Herod and his fury, which dominate the play, were of more interest to the writer, the players or the audience than was the gift giving. When he learns that the three kings have evaded him, all control is lost; Herod begins to rage. His speech degenerates to exclamations and threats. He acknowledges his fury by saying, "I rent! I rawe! and now run I wode!" (781) He declares that all young children shall die so that he may be famous and "all folke me dowt and drede,/ And offur to me bothe gold, rychesse and mede" (790,791). His soldiers at first refuse so cruel an order but when threatened with death they obey. One of the soldiers reports that they have been ordered to pile all the corpses in wagons and carry them to Herod. As Herod enters the bloody scene, one of the women, who has learned of the cause of the slaughter, tells him that the child whom he seeks has fled to Egypt. Herod's impotence is always made explicit. The play ends with Herod riding off to Egypt to lay it waste.

The Digby manuscript contains a play called "The Killing of the Children" in which Herod also plays the usual role.[27] The play begins after the Magi have first visited Herod and after the adoration. Herod begins the play with thirty one lines of bragging. He claims to "reigne in welthe" (58), to be "myghty in feld for to fyght" (62) and to be incomparable. Herod sends his messenger to search the

---

[27] *The Digby Plays* ed. F.J. Furnivall (EETS ES 70, repr. London 196)

country for rebels. The messenger returning is afraid to tell what he knows for fear of death, but eventually, and reluctantly, informs Herod that the three kings who had visited him have left the country. Herod's response is not so mad as has been promised in the prologue, though the comment in the prologue that "as a wodman he gan to fray" suggests that the role may have been played with considerable physical violence not indicated by the words or the syntax of the text. Herod is rational enough to call for his soldiers at once and to order the slaughter of all children two years of age. He admits that his action is one of revenge. His soldiers say that they will obey cheerfully. Herod's sixteen line exhortation with its repetition of a series of commands and its insistence on his importance suggests a certain hysteria but he always manages complete sentences. When the soldiers have gone, Herod's messenger begs that, for "Mahoundes sake," (136) Herod make him a knight. Herod admits that Watkyn has been his "seruaunt and messangere many a day" (146) but says that he has never fought. Watkyn is pleased to be given a chance to prove himself in this campaign and pledges that if he finds a child he "shalle choppe it on a blokke" (157) but he does confess that he is afraid of "a woman with a rokke" (159). The jesting between servant and master continues as Watkyn brags of his courage against a thousand babies but his fear of women and his hope that "no man wole smyte me" (204). Here indeed is a man wanting knighthood for carpet considerations. When Mary and Joseph have fled to Egypt Watkyn and the soldiers accost the women of Bethlehem and kill

their children. Then the women attack Watkyn with their distaffs until he is rescued by the soldiers. The soldiers report the slaughter of the innocents to Herod; Watkyn reports on the ugly mood of the women. Slaves and parasites deal with women; bragging soldiers ignore them. Herod panics on finding that his rival has escaped and his language deteriorates to exclamations: "Oute! I am madde! My wyttes be ner goon!" (365) He acknowledges killing innocent with guilty and is aware that he may have missed killing the child he sought. Physical deterioration accompanies his linguistic incoherence. Calling on "My lord, Mahound," he dies (385).

*

The bragging soldiers of the Nativity plays vary less from cycle to cycle than do the bragging soldiers of the creation or the crucifixion. The language of the tyrants in the four complete cycles is heavy on rhyme and alliteration, threats and physical violence. In all of the plays which we still have, Herod's hubris is established and embellished, usually in the first speeches of the plays and sometimes at the beginning of each of the plays in which he appears. He controls the kingdoms of the earth, the elements, and the planets.

In all of the Herod plays the tyrant is provided with one or more parasites or clever slaves. They announce him, protect him, praise him, convey his wishes and enlarge his fame and influence. As in Hrotsvitha's plays, however, the anticipation, the accomplishments, and the fear must be provided by the bragging

soldier's present allies because his enemies do not recognize his power. There are servants, counsellors and soldiers who flatter him and increase his reputation. They are usually the ones who suggest the plan to send the kings to find the baby and save Herod the effort. They are more clever than he. These parasites also fear their powerful master and create the anxiety which the young lover created in Roman comedy.

Herod's hubris is associated with his pagan religious conviction, although which is cause and which is effect would be hard to determine. In each of the plays Herod swears by, or defends, Mahomet. The result of this pagan preference is most clearly stated by the Coventry Herod who swears by Mahomet, claims to be a descendent of Jupiter and announces that he is "Cheff Capten of Hell" (503). It is clear, however, that, despite his claims, Herod cannot control the three earthly kings; he often realizes that his destruction of the innocents is unavailing; he cannot prevent death from overcoming him at the conclusion of several of the plays. His claims clearly are false with respect to his ability to control the elements and are, therefore, suspect in all other ways also. Before he disappears from the action his boasts are always shown to be empty.

He never meets his major rival, whom he first denies and then cannot find. He does not even spend much time on stage with the wise men. The vacuum on stage occasioned by the rival's physical absence, as we saw in Hrotsvitha, forces the enlargement of Herod's role and he dominates the stage in a way unheard of by his

classical ancestors. He is on stage for as much as two thirds of the plays in which he has a role and he speaks approximately half the lines spoken while he is on the stage.[28]

The proportion of the time which Herod is given on stage and the number of lines which he is given to speak are expanded so that he is no longer the unknown soldier of Roman comedy. God and Christ are so powerful that, even though they do not appear, indeed, because they do not appear, the soldier's role must expand to fill time, space and the role of rival in the plot. Pharaoh and Augustus are invented in the same mold as Herod, perhaps to give other guilds or actors an opportunity to achieve Herod's popular notoriety; in any case they acquire similar attributes and, with the exception of the Coventry Augustus, they copy Herod's style.

The bragging soldier is still a creation associated with, and created by unusual language. In addition to his hubris, which extends to mastery of kingdoms and elements, he is still associated with exaggerated numbers. Thousands of infants are slain. His language when he is furious expands to extra syllables and magnificent alliteration or disintegrates into stanzas of expostulation and cursing. Such expansion would indicate that actors, or audience, or both enjoyed and encouraged the extravagance and exaggeration of the familiar strutting figure.

---

[28] The Wakefield proportions are slightly higher and in that cycle the Pharaoh and Caesar Augustus follow a similar pattern.

In the majority of the plays he is associated with food. He throws banquets for soldiers, he invites the kings to dinner; what is more, in the Coventry and Wakefield plays, in an interesting parallel to Christ's connection with bread and wine, Herod metaphorically becomes food. In the Coventry play he says that people who contemplate him will need no food or drink (513), and in the Wakefield play, cheered by the slaughter of the babies, he declares, "all of sugar is my gall" (XVI, 475). The oaths sworn by an ability to eat bread may have been common contemporary polite references to the eucharist and damnation but while the characters were swearing anachronistically they might just as well have sworn by the body of Christ, or the church, or God's wounds. They or their creators do not; they find it appropriate for this character to swear by food.

Wealth in these plays is largely associated with reward; the messengers and soldiers are well paid. It is assumed that Herod has wealth and that he will pay for services. There is no doubt that this would have been a perfectly normal expectation at a contemporary court, but other courtly activities – hunting or jousting, singing or reciting, worshipping or dealing with estates – are not activities which make their way into the texts. If verisimilitude were the reason for incorporating details about food or money the text could be expected to exhibit a much wider range of activities.

Women too are rewards. The bragging soldier has never been interested in loving women; women are property, symbols of achievement. The women in

Hrotsvitha were objects with which the emperors could demonstrate their power. The Herod of the Wakefield plays is a spokesman for all bragging soldiers and their relationships with women when he says to the soldiers who have slaughtered the innocents, "If I bere this crowne/ ye shall haue a lady/ Ilkon to hym layd, and wed at his wyll" (XVI, 431-33). The rivalry between the bragging soldier and the young lover, therefore, always says something about attitudes to women and children. The young lover, however fleetingly, values women's love, recognizes the dignity of children. The bragging soldier does not.

Rivalry is clearly expressed in the Nativity plays and undoubtedly the paradox of rich and powerful impotence pitted against poor and infantile strength is one of the elements which make both the occasion of the Nativity plays and and their exaggeration of Herod's hubris rewarding. Indeed, the association of the Christian story of rebirth with the ancient dramatic figures vital enough to survive through the centuries between the fall of one Roman Empire and the rise of another breathes new force into both the Christian story and the ancient figures. The Christian babe's vulnerability is emphasized by the slaughter of innocents, by the violence of the 'old man' in his death throes. Each of the cycles develops the tyrant's violence as he threatens the kings, his counsellors, and the audience. Threats to Herod's counsellors and to the worshipping kings, like the threats to various wise counsellors in Hrotsvitha's plays suggest the hubris of the old man, the old religion, the old ways, the old year. The cycle plays add to the

mistreatment of women the callous attitudes to infants, thus touching both basic sympathies and basic sacrificial instincts. The threats of violence against the spectators invite them to enter into both an awareness of their own vulnerability and of the shallowness of Herod's boasting. Much ancient ritual survives beneath Plautus' plays and survives still beneath the Herod plays. Herod has outlived all knowledge of the rituals which brought him into existence but still summons the tensions of the underlying struggle. The vulnerability of the new year, the new religion, newly institutionalized, newly imperial, the church militant struggling against the heathen, born anew to conquer the old bragging soldier in all of his guises from the old year to the pagan Mahomet, energizes the combat played out in the Nativity plays. The Creation plays and the Crucifixion plays are logical and theological beginnings and endings to the story, but *in medias res,* in the Nativity plays, is the centre of every human's experience; birth and death.

The personification of evils, the defiance of God's power, the blackly humorous ranting – humorous because it is so grandiose and empty, black because it is accompanied by threats and acts of violence – clearly mark Herod and his brothers as descendants of the tyrants in Hrotsvitha. They also mark him as the Mystery Cycles' parallel to the Vice of the Morality plays.

*

Given the probable cause and timing of the Cycle Plays, the Feast of Corpus Christi, it is not surprising that the bulk of the plays in each cycle deal with aspects

of Christ's death, resurrection and its consequences: Pentecost, the Harrowing of Hell, and the Final Judgment. A celebration of the body of Christ, of the power of the blood and body of Christ as presented in the Mass, logically centres on the occasions of Christ's death and resurrection. The Annunciation and Nativity occupy the next largest group of plays. All of the other plays bear upon these two major events. Of the sixteen plays for which we still have texts in the Chester Cycle, four deal with aspects of the nativity and thirteen with the crucifixion or its consequences. Similarly of the forty two plays in the N-Town Cycle thirteen deal with events surrounding the nativity while seventeen, some of them lengthy and with several scenes, deal with the crucifixion. Of the thirty two plays in the Wakefield Cycle nine deal with the nativity and thirteen with the crucifixion. Of the fifty eight plays in the York Cycle eight deal with the nativity while more than twenty deal with the events of the crucifixion. [See Appendix A for a list of the plays.]

Many of these plays follow their sources without the embellishments which have accumulated around the Herod story. The stories may be more detailed than the Biblical originals but they do not stray far from their sources and they do not involve the sort of rivalry which brings out the soldier; on the simplest level they may not involve any official figures who may be turned into tyrants, though the Cain and Abel plays are examples of the urge, given the slightest encouragment, to create braggart soldiers. The struggles in the plots are, for the most part, struggles

between humans, some of whom may be selfish or self serving but, who do not completely deny goodness. Stories such as the Sacrifice of Isaac or the Conception of Mary are clear examples. Thus, it is not surprising that in most of the plays in the Cycles there is no bragging soldier. Lucifer's battle with God to gain the worship of the angels, Herod's fear of a child who will take over his job, these are fertile fields. The scenes of the crucifixion would also seem to be likely battle zones.

However, the plays of the Chester Cycle illustrate the problems that the bragging soldier has in the plays dealing with Christ's death and resurrection. The Chester cycle, for example, begins the road to the crucifixion with a scene about Mary Magdalene. In this play Judas Iscariot makes his first appearance as a visitor dining in Lazarus' home. He complains of the waste of precious ointment which Mary lavishes on Christ's feet (XIV,65-72). In more than one cycle this connection between a dinner, a precious object and a woman brings forth an attempt to turn Judas into a bragging soldier. But Christ is present at the dinner also. So, although all the elements are present, the bragging soldier cannot expand, certainly not in the way that the role of Herod dominates the Nativity plays. Judas has but eight lines.

It is not until two hundred lines later, after Christ's entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple, that Judas reappears and takes advantage of the opportunity of Christ's absence to become a villain; in soliloquy, he pronounces

himself still "wroth as I may be" (XIV, 266) because of the lost money. He expands on his rage and his concern for the value of the ointment for forty lines. Because of it he says he has "great envye" (XIV, 273) and he decides that Jesus "himselfe shalbe sould/ to the Jewes, or that I sytt,/ fo the tenth penye of hit" (XIV, 292-294). Only when away from Christ and contemplating his bargain with Annas and Caiaphas does Judas say how angry he is. The rival must exist but the rival must be absent. In the presence of the priests, however, Judas is a bargainer, not a boaster. In spite of having some traits of a bragging soldier, such as his greed and regular appearance at table and his boasting about his ability as treasurer, Judas' awareness of the enemy, his attempts to control Christ, and his ability to "beguyle" (XIV, 304) suggest the characteristics of a truculent and not very clever slave. I like to believe that such a part may have been shaped by a local cooper who hoped to be hired to play the Herod of the Nativity plays in future years, or by a fletcher who knew that he would never have a part in the Vintners' or Goldsmith's play and had best make the most of his opportunity to rave acceptably in public. The role of antagonist is so powerful in the nativity plays that it struggles to assert itself in other plays, but the conditions are not right.

Christ is acknowledged and feared. The problem for the soldier in the plays of the crucifixion is not to deny Christ; in most cases; it is to get rid of him. It must be recalled that one of the most enduring conventions concerning the bragging

soldier is that he not contact his rival.[29] In the scenes of the crucifixion, Christ is embarrassingly present, not only present but bound by the sources and by his own power not to engage in the sort of nose-thumbing banter which engaged the last minutes of Hrotsvitha's saintly heroines. The Biblical texts are clear about Christ's silence before his accusers. Christ chooses to die. Those who kill him do his will. His power may be as important as his dignity in preserving his decorum.

Nonetheless, habit dies hard and the villains often refer to Christ as impertinent. The Jews in the Trial scene of the Chester play refer to Jesus as "janglinge"(XVI,9) and "babelavaunt" (XVI,22), words which certainly might have been used by the officials to describe Hrotsvitha's young women, words which express the frustrations of the officials who utter them. But in view of Christ's dignified behaviour the accusations won't wash. Thus the would be bragging soldiers look far more villainous than comic. They can blossom fully into comic villainy only when Christ is absent and Christ's frequent presence in the scenes surrounding the crucifixion accounts for the soldiers' apparent flickering in and out of existence.

The driving force of the Chester Trial and Crucifixion scenes is the chorus of Jews. They visit, in turn, the courts of Cayphus, Pilate, Herod and then they return

---

[29] See the Summary concluding Chapter I. Centuries later Shakespeare still gets great comic mileage out of not being able to bring either Sir Andrew Aguecheek or Falstaff to face his enemy.

to Pilate. Cayphus and Annas, as well as the Jewish, chorus are abusive. Pilate is restrained in the manner of this Cycle which creates, at least in its final form, dignified pagans such as Octavius and Pilate as contrasting parallels to its villains. Herod perhaps recalls for the audience the scenes from the play of the Magi and the Slaughter of the Innocents when he welcomes Jesus by saying, "for oftetymes I have binne in that intent/ after thee to have sent"(XVI,169). Jesus before Herod is "dombe"(XVI,180), a fact which drives Herod "nigh wood for woo"(XVI,187). Herod's madness is limited, however, to two eight-line stanzas; then he orders Christ dressed in a white robe and returned to Pilate.

In the N Town Cycle, Play 29 begins with Herod allying himself with Mahownde and threatening that "To kylle a thowsand Crystyn I gyf not an hawe!"(33) His *miles* prove themselves most perfect parasites, flattering Herod's judgement and praising his decisions. But he knows that "The Son of God hymself he callyth,/ and Kyng of Jewys he seyth is he," and after he sends his soldiers to find Christ he goes to have a rest. The acknowledgement of his rival wears him out. For the rest of this play and much of the next Christ is present. In Play 31 Satan appears and one might expect him to have about him the air of a bragging soldier. Indeed, his opening is alliteratively auspicious.

> Thus I reyne as a rochand with a rynggyng rowth!
>
> As a devyl most dowty, dred is my dynt!
>
> Many a thowsand develys, to me do ȝei lowth,

Brennyng in flamys as fyre out of flynt!(1-4)

The bragging and the numbers of followers and the language have no sooner encouraged the audience to expect a braggart than Satan says that he is very worried, "Of a prophete .at Jesu men calle."(14) The mention of his rival puts a chill on his soldiering.

The Satan of Play 23 states the problems of the bragging soldier in the crucifixion plays most clearly.

"If þat he be Goddys sone, he wyl brede a shrewe
And werke us mech wrake, both wrech and woo!
Sorwe and care he wyl sone strewe;
All oure gode day þan xulde sone be goo.
And all oure lore and all oure lawe he wyl down hewe,
And þan be we all lorn, if þat it be soo –" (29-34)

As soon as the soldier recognizes his foe his comic, bragging days are gone. He may try to brag and threaten but he knows he is lost.

The Wakefield Cycle with its greater creativity, its tendency, at least in the plays of the 'Wakefield Master,' to deviate from the bare bones of the sources, this cycle might be more fertile ground for the soldier. The crucifixion begins with play XX, The Conspiracy; The Conspiracy begins with Pilate ranting in full alliterating flight for the first 27 lines. But then the tone of his speech slowly changes as he describes the "lurdan ledyr"(32) who "if he lyf a yere/ dystroy oure law must"(38).

Pilate's fear becomes manifest in the next 26 lines and his bragging fades as his fear and his need to spy and plan increases. Caiaphus makes every effort to play the parasite and flatter Pilate but both he and Annias spoil the effect by elaborating on the influence of Jesus. Thus, though Pilate may swear by "Mahowns bloode so dere"(116), he cannot convince himself, or the audience, that he is walking in Herod's footsteps. This Pilate is at his best when threatening Judas. And here it is easy to see that the bragging soldier requires a victim whose power he denies. Pilate and his two parasites threaten Judas and take him prisoner. Judas offers to sell Jesus and money enters the plot along with the story of the woman who has brought Jesus precious ointment which might have been sold for profit. Pilate's tendency to alliterate returns as he sees a way to defeat Jesus. Some 250 lines later, as Pilate prepares to complete his business with Judas, the bragging and threatening continue. Both Pilate and his soldier swear by 'mahown' and by the end of the scene, just before Jesus returns to the stage Pilate clearly allies himself clearly with the wrong master when he says:

> And mahowne that is myghfull he menske you euermare!
> Bryng you safe and sownde with that brodell to me
> In place
> where so euer ye weynd,
> ye knyghtys so heynde,
> Sir lucyfer the feynde

he lede you the trace! (645-651)

Immediately Jesus is brought before him, however, Pilate speaks of Jesus' power, comparing Christ, ironically enough, to Caesar and Herod; his solution is to send Christ to Caiaphus. This is the pattern throughout the Wakefield Cycle. Pilate opens "The Scourging," and "The Crucifixion" with ranting, but in each case the confrontation with Christ limits him. Black humour there may be as the torturers go about their business, but there is not the overweening confidence of even a character like Constantine in Hrotsvitha, who may be afraid of the Scythians but is in no doubt that his general and his daughter will bow to his will. The opening of the 24th play in the Cycle, when Pilate is convinced that his adversary is dead demonstrates the soldier's need to be free of the rival's power. For 412 lines Pilate and his servants joke and play. Pilate shows off in Latin and French and brags of his power. Here he is the foolish bragging soldier; indeed he joins with his servants to gamble for Christ's garment. He sleeps and plays at dice; his servants talk of the crucifixion as play, with all the many meanings and ambiguities and wit which comedy expects. As the servants report over and over that Christ is dead the soldier plays. Everyone's relief is palpable.

The 26th play begins in the same mood. The audience has seen Christ delivering the souls of the blessed. Pilate still believes his adversary is dead. His joy is short lived, however, as first the Centurian and then his advisers, Annas and Caiaphas warn him to guard against Christ's return. Even as their plans are

destroyed, traces of the bragging soldier remain. Pilate rewards his friends with 10,000 pounds in return for their reporting that Christ's body was stolen by an army of 10,000. Pilate wishes them the "blyssyng of mahowne" and exits, even as Jesus enters. Pilate is not seen again. Although he escapes Herod's horrific end, his impotence is clear. He may lie to the world and reward his servants but Jesus is risen nonetheless.

The 30th play in this Cycle, The Judgment, is also of some interest because Titivillus makes an appearance but he is not the energetic demon of the Morality. The play begins with one sinner after another lamenting a misspent life. The sinners are shortly joined by demons, also lamenting that Doomsday has arrived. They sound rather mournful that they must gather together their evidence against the damned and go to the judgment. The demons sound like a group of lawyers in the pub at a recess, or perhaps the lawyers' clerks, reluctant to go back to work, preferring to drink and discuss the sinful ways of the world. Titivillus appears, the best demon of them all but not a bragging soldier. A gravedigger, a businessman, a lawyer perhaps, working on the punishment of the damned.

*

The bragging soldier as he appears in the scenes of Christ's crucifixion and death is both more evident and more elusive than he is in the plays already considered. For one thing, these scenes, spanning the historic and anagogic time between Palm Sunday and the Apocalypse comprise one third to one half of each

of the cycles, a total of more than sixty plays. The scenes are crowded with incident; brief Biblical references are expanded and enlivened by throngs of anonymous soldiers, women, and Jews in addition to the historical priests, rulers and bystanders named in the Bible or in traditional accounts of Christ's final days. Relatively minor characters, exhibiting great potential to become bragging soldiers, step on stage, give momentary performances and then step off to be heard of no more.

The elusiveness of the bragging soldier in these scenes is also predictable. The choice of characters, and events, and the grouping of scenes varies widely from cycle to cycle. The events following the Passion are given more emphasis in the Chester cycle, while the trial scenes are considered in more detail in the York cycle, the torture scenes in another. The battle with Antichrist was important enough at Chester to give rise to more than one version of a story which was of little concern in the other cycles. Some cycles give more emphasis to the trials and the religious conflict while others emphasized Christ's physical suffering.

Clearly some scenes are more likely to provide the kinds of conflict in which the bragging soldier emerges. Here are the archetypal scenes of martyrdom, the denial of Christ's divinity, the denial of God's power, the ultimate rivalry between earthly and heavenly power. In addition, Palm Sunday and Passover provide occasions with food and holiday clothing. Judas' betrayal provides money. There are soldiers of various ranks and possibilities for violence. Pilate and Herod as

well as Annas and Caiaphus, Judas and a host of centurions think themselves important enough to deny a higher power. There is even, close to the dramatist's hand, one of the rarer commodities in the New Testament text, Mary Magdalene, a courtesan. The crucifixion, thus, provides more fertile ground than the chaste throne room of the Creation, or the barren fields of Cain and Abel. However the crucifixion does not cast up a soldier of the rank of Herod and the reasons are instructive.

Far more important than the trappings of the bragging soldier, food and money and courtesans and parasites, which clearly can be supplied in metaphor if the text will provide them in no other way, is the relationship with the young lover. The bragging soldier brings with him the trappings; they help the audience to identify him; they help the writer or actor to create him. However, it is the relationship with the young lover which determines whether there will be a bragging soldier at all.

I predicted at the beginning of this chapter that where the claim of the true lover was denied, where there was rivalry, a struggle for ultimate powers, the bragging soldier might be expected to appear. Rivalry is the prime requirement. Lucifer, and Pharoh and Herod, among others, obliged. They also continued the pattern evident in Hrotsvitha, that the bragging soldier will be a ruler or an important person. The Crucifixion provides many important persons whether

secular, like Pilate, or religious, like Annas and Caiaphus, or even self-important, like Judas, who deny the right of God to direct their actions but, and here is the crux of the matter, in these plays the tyrants do not deny Christ's existence and potential. It is his potential which is the problem. For the development of a bragging soldier, denial of the power of the young lover is the second requirement. Money and food and courtesans and parasites are the soldier's substitutes for power. The young lover in Christian drama needs no such props.

Indeed, when Christ as an adult is present on the stage He does not require servants to speak for him and does not have women who long to die to be with him. The sources of the stories are in part responsible for this limitation. But the unstated, unquestioned, universally accepted convention of God's omnipotence, of the power of life over death, is armour enough for the young lover. The stories are there in the Bible, in the Biblical narratives, in the collections of saints' lives, in the traditions. But the choice of story lies with the writer and the audience, and for them stories which have tyrants, or bragging soldiers, stories in which the ancient plot is played out, have an appeal. When the triangle of lover, woman and soldier does not occur, when the rivalry is missing, there is no bragging soldier. But there is the further condition that the young lover be absent, or denied his power. The braggart soldier literally acts out the privative nature of evil. When faced with his rival, when faced with the power of good, he vanishes. When the young lover is absent the soldier strides about thinking that he is accomplishing his

own purposes. This is why the soldier functions best in drama. In narrative the narrator's knowledge, and didactic purpose spoil the illusion. The necessity for the young lover's absence is most clearly illustrated in the plays dealing with the crucifixion, because in them, when Christ is present, the rivalry between good and evil for the souls of humans is clear and the human condition is desperate. The Moralities and the Mystery Cycles demonstrate a central truth of drama: when the rivals meet and oppose their powers, tragedy is the result; when they don't meet or when the power of the powerful is denied, comedy is the result.

CONCLUSION

After all of this terradiddle the small voice of commonsense says, "But surely it is true that these characters exist in many places and in most times. Dramatists merely record the life around them. Wherever men put on uniforms some of them begin to strut. Whenever there are rich people there are parasites. While people are allowed to control other people, abuses of power will occur and the abusers will naturally become victims of their own delusions of grandeur. As long as people fall in love, there will be rivalry. As long as women are vulnerable, they will fall to seducers and need to be rescued by true lovers. Everyone uses language. Language is the means which we all use to create our selves and our worlds. The behaviour which so astonishes you is merely the natural consequence of the human condition." And as usual commonsense is partly right.

But in real life there are bragging physicians. There are bragging judges and bragging artists - with and without hungry parasites, courtesans, rivals and clever servants. In real life generals and their parasites, in addition to buying slave girls, also build palaces and furnish them sumptuously. In real life they buy closets full of shoes, invest in jewelry from Tiffany's or Impressionist paintings, and they acquire fleets of expensive chariots with impressive horses and harness. The soldiers and parasites of drama could just as easily speak of golden bathtubs as of

dinners, but they do not. They could as easily desire armaments as women, but they do not. Indeed their armaments are rarely mentioned and when they are, they are decorations, props, not necessities; with the exception of Pyrgopolynices' brilliant shield, their armaments are often comic or inadequate. In medieval drama the weapons, if they are mentioned are more often wooden, or hacked up, to suggest fraudulent battles, than beautifully decorated to suggest wealth and power.[1] In real life men who are rivals for a woman's love often know each other, sometimes are friends, occasionally attack each other. In real life there are women who enjoy the apparent power of military bullies and join in the destructive behaviour of their mates. In the case of the bragging soldier this does not happen. If dramatists were recording 'real life' their bragging officials would have a wider range of acquaintance and habit. That they do not, that Pyrgopolinices, Thraso, Julian, Herod and Richard III have so much in common is a powerful argument for two things (at least): the bragging soldier, as created in classical drama, provides for the dramatist, even one like Hrotsvitha, who has in mind a more or less metaphorical stage, solutions to certain dramatic problems; then, once a character like the bragging soldier has been created to fill a dramatic niche, tradition provides future dramatists with a ready made set of characteristics from which to

---

[1] Alan C. Dessen, "The Public Vice and the Two Phased Moral Play," in *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Plays* (Lincoln, Ne.:University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 17-37.

choose. That these characteristics are chosen, conversely, argues a knowledge or, more often, an experience of the tradition.

If there is a hero with a thousand faces then there is also a villain with at least that many and the comic villain wearing a vaguely military uniform is one of the most easily recognizable, dependable and, therefore, most beguiling. The vital element here is the element of comedy, whether cheerful, ironic or downright black. Other villains exist, villains with different associations. It is because the bragging soldier was so full of human frailty, and because the bragging soldier's power was so clearly a reflection of his foes' anxieties, and his boasts were so completely hollow – at least within the parameters set by the young lover – that he could become the comic Vicious Tyrant figure of medieval drama. What is of interest here is not real life but the dramatic convention, the parts of real life which dramatists have in several eras conventionally chosen to depict as the life which surrounds the villain known as the bragging soldier.

The villain's powers are determined by the powers of the hero. The young lover of classical times is relatively passive. He must be helped by a slave. The slave's abilities are intellectual: he plans and talks. The soldier is what the slave makes him, and it is often to the slave's advantage to have an apparently frightening adversary. When the hero becomes a god the balance of power is radically shifted. The soldier does not change greatly, but he needs more troops.

The object of their rivalry, the woman, whether she is a courtesan, a woman devoted to Christ or, in a more allegorical fashion, the soul of humankind, is constant in her struggle to be united with her true love. That these conventions are chosen, whether consciously or unconsciously, for social, theological, or psychological reasons is not as important as the fact that theatrically, dramatically such conventions work. Even, or perhaps especially, when the hero is a god, it is still to the dramatist's advantage to have a frightening rival.

Having shown in Chapter 2 that the Bragging Soldier of classical comedy is transformed into a Proto Vice when he become the Bragging Tyrant of medieval drama what remains? Why not leave the work of Charlotte Spivack to speak for itself and demonstrate the development of Vice figures as they mature in the Moralities.[2] Why trace them as they fitfully appear in the Mysteries? In part because the later history of the Bragging Tyrant is so interesting. Largely because the fitfulness, as we've just seen, is so instructive. The soldier's major appearance in the Mysteries in the person of Herod is so powerful that it begs to be addressed, and, because Bernard Spivack has shown the relationship of Shakespeare's Richard III and Iago to the Vice Figure, it seems important to consider Herod and his brothers, the Vicious Tyrants of the Mysteries, as being linear descendants of

---

[2] See the note to C. Spivack's *The Comedy of Evil in Shakespeare's Stage* in the Introduction.

Bragging Soldiers and the step-fathers of Shakespeare's fearful creations.[3] For Richard III owes as much, if not more, to the bragging Tyrants of Boethius' description, to Hrotsvitha's experiments, and to Herod's fantastic development as he does to Titivullus and his friends from the Moralities. Richard owes much to Lucifer before the fall, shining in his arrogance, and to Herod, slaughtering the innocents in his rage. Richard does not woo Lady Anne and Queen Elizabeth for love but as objects which belong to his rivals, and his double wooing owes much to the double plot of Roman comedy as it was transformed in the Christian Drama. The first wooing is the wooing of Lucifer the unfallen. The second is the desperate wooing of the Devil. Richard's rival, when Richard has literally cleared the stage for him and he finally makes an entrance in the last act, is painted godlike. There is no doubt but that the brief, wordless final battle is between "God's enemy"(V,iii,252) and a godlike Richmond. Richard never speaks to Richmond, rarely speaks of him, denies his power. *Richard III* is both Morality and Mystery Play, centered as it is on the powerful figure of the Bragging Soldier, not as he appears in his classical guises but as he appears in Christian Drama, as a martial vice personified. Above all, it may be noted that he and Richmond are

---

[3] See the note to B. Spivack's *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to His Major Villains* in the Introduction.

rivals who rarely appear on stage with each other, and that Richard cannot, in the eternal scheme of things be victorious.

On the other hand, Iago's intimate knowledge of his rival, his long conversations with Othello mark him clearly as not being a descendant of the soldier, whose trappings, whose purse and drink and bragging he often uses to further his plots, but rather as a descendant of the Roman's clever slave, the servant who serves the wrong master and the Vice of the Moralities.

Hrotsvitha's claim to have been familiar with the work of Terence is discussed at the beginning of Chapter II, and I then demonstrated how her bragging soldiers are changed by their Christian context. Three or more centuries later the bragging soldiers of the Mystery Cycles appear to have continued in the direction of the adaptations whose beginnings were discussed in the conclusion to Chapter II. It is possible that, like Hrotsvitha, the many writers of the Mystery Cycles had access to Terence or even to Plautus; nonetheless, the likelihood that playwrights widely separated by time and space would create similar characters with similar associations is unlikely. That they do is a powerful argument for some continuation throughout the centuries of a dramatic tradition, an unwritten popular tradition, whether in folk drama or among travelling players.[4] More important is

---

[4] The evidence concerning Terence in the middle ages suggests that while copies of Terence MS were widely available in libraries the first edition of Terence was not printed until 1470 and the first production since antiquity of a Terence

the clear indication in Hrotsvitha's work of the ways in which the bragging soldiers of classical drama became the Vicious Tyrants of Medieval Mystery Cycles. The soldier's nemesis in Classical Comedy, the clever slave, becomes in Medieval Drama, and later, a universal nemesis, an agent of evil portrayed in whatever way evil is viewed by the age which inspires him. The bragging soldier, meanwhile, becomes a Vicious Tyrant, a figure still reflecting the audience's desires and fears; he continues operating throughout the ages as a military officer, though in periods when only the great are important enough to dominate the stage he may have the exalted rank of emperor or dictator; he still appears on battlefields where good and evil are clear rivals for human souls and where humour, bright or black, is used to destroy the illusion of his power.

---

play, the *Andria*, did not take place until 1476 in Florence. Not all of Plautus was available but copies of the first eight plays were not rare. See *Texts and Transmissions: a Survey of the Latin Classics.* ed. L. D. Reynolds (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983), Plautus 302-307 and Terence 413-420.

APPENDIX A THE PLAYS

Plautus

Plautus.*Comoediae.* Oxford, 1968. 1958.

Amphitruo
Asinaria
Aulularia
Bacchides
Captivi
Casina
Cistellaria
Curculio
Epidicus
Menaechmi
Mercator
Miles Gloriosus
Mostellaria
Persa
Poenulus
Pseudolus
Rudens
Stichus
Trinummus
Truculentus
Vidularia

Terence

Terence. *Eunuchus* in *Comoediae.* Oxford,

Andria
Heautontimorumenos
Eunouchus
Phormio
Adelphoe
Hecyra

Hrotsvitha

Homeyer, H. *Hrotsvithae Opera.* München: Verlag Ferdinand: Schoningh, 1970.
_____ ed. and trans. *Hrotsvitha von Gandersheim*. München: Verlag Ferdinand Schoningh, 1973.

Gallicanus
Dulcitius

Calimachus
Abraham
Paphnutius
Sapientia

The Chester Cycle

The Chester Mystery Cycle: A Reduced Facimile of Huntington Library MS 2. Introduction by P.M. Lumiansky and David Mills. University of Leeds School of English, 1980

Lumiansky, P.M. and David Mills, eds. *The Chester Mystery Cycle.* 2 vols. EETS. 1974.

I The Fall of Lucifer The Tanners
II Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel The Drapers
III Noah's Flood The Waterleader and Drawers of Dee
IV Abraham, Lot, and Melchysedeck; Abraham and Isaac The Barbers
V Moses and the Law; Balaack and Balaam The Cappers
VI The Annunciation and the Nativity The Wrights
VII The Shepherds The Painters
VIII The Three Kings The Vintners
IX The Offerings of the Three Kings The Mercers
X The Purification; Christ and the Doctors The Blacksmiths
XII The Temptation; the Woman Taken in Adultery The Butchers
XIII The Blind Chelidonian; the Raising of Lazarus The Glovers
XIV Christ at the House of Simon the Leper; Christ and the Money-lenders; Judas' Plot The Corvisors
XV The Last Supper; The Betrayal of Christ The Bakers
XVI The Trial and Flagellation The Fletchers, Bowyers, Coopers and Stringers.
XVII The Passion The Ironmongers
XVIII The Resurrection The Skinners
XIX Christ on the Road to Emmaus; Doubting Thomas The Saddlers
XX The Ascension The Tailors
XXI Pentecost The Fishmongers
XXII The Prophets of Antichrist The Clothworkers
XXIII Antichrist The Dyers
XXIV The Last Judgement The Websters
XXIII MS P The Peniarth 'Antichrist'
XVI MS C The Chester 'Trial and Flagellation'

The N-Town Cycle

Block, K.S. ed. *Ludus Coventriae or The Plaie Called Corpus Christi*. EETS ES 120, London, 1922.
Craig, Hardin. *The Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*. EETS ES 87, London, 1957.

1. The Creation of Heaven and the Angels; Fall of Lucifer
2. The Creation of the World and Man; Fall of Man
3. Cain and Abel
4. Noah and the Death of Lamech
5. Abraham and Isaac
6. Moses
7. The Prophets
8. The Conception of Mary (Barrenness of Anna)
9. Mary in the Temple
10. The Betrothal of Mary
11. The Parliament of Heaven; The Salutation and Conception
12. Joseph's Return
13. The Visit to Elizabeth
    Prologue of Summoner
14. The Trial of Joseph and Mary
15. The Birth of Christ
16. The Adoration of the Shepherds
18. The Adoration of the Magi
19. The Purification
20. The Massacre of the Innocents; The Death of Herod
21. Christ and the Doctors
    The Baptism
23. The Temptation
24. The Woman Taken in Adultery
25. The Raising of Lazarus
    Passion Play I
26. Prologues of Demon and of John the Baptist; The Council of the Jews; The Entry into Jerusalem
27. The Last Supper and The conspiracy of the Jews and Judas
28. The Betrayal
    Prologue of the Doctors
    Passion Play II
29. King Herod; The Trial of Christ before Annas and Caiaphas; Peter's Denial
30. The Death of Judas; The Trial of Christ Before Pilate; The Trial of Christ before Herod

31. Pilate's Wife's Dream; The Trial of Christ and the Thieves before Pilate; The Condemnation and Scourging
32. The Procession to Calvary; The Crucifixion
33. The Descent into Hell of Anima Christi
34. The Embassy to Pilate of Joseph of Arimathea; The Episode of Longeus; The Descent from the Cross and Burial; The Guarding of the Sepulchre
35. The Harrowing of hell; The Reurrection and Appearance to the Virgin; The Compact of the Soldiers and Pilate
36. The Announcement to the Three Maries
37. The Appearance to Mary Magdalen
38. The Appearance on the Way to Emmaus; The Appearance to Thomas
39. The Ascension and The Choice of Mattias
40. The Day of Pentecost
41. The Assumption of the Virgin
42. Doomsday

The Wakefield Cycle

Pollard, A.W. ed. *The Towneley Plays.* EETS ES 71,repr. London 1897.

I The Creation
II The Killing of Abel
III Noah and the Ark
IV Abraham
V Isaac
VI Jacob
VII The Prophets
VIII Pharaoh
IX Caesar Augustus
X The Annunciation
XI The Salutation of Elizabeth
XII Shepherds' Play I
XIII Shepherds' Play II
XIV Offering of the Magi
XV The Flight into Egypt
XVI Herod the Great
XVII The Purification of mary
XVIII The Play of the Doctors
XIX John the Baptist
XX The Conspiracy

XXI The Buffeting
XXII The Scourging
XXIII The Crucifixion
XXIV The Talents
XXV The Deliverance of Souls
XXVI The Resurrection of the Lord
XXVII The Pilgrims
XXVIII Thomas of India
XXIX The Lord's Ascension
XXX The Judgment
XXXI Lazarus
XXXII The Hanging of Judas

The York Cycle

Smith, Lucy Toulmin, ed. *York Plays.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885.

I	The Creation; Fall of Lucifer	The Barbers
II	The Creation to the Fifth Day	Playsterers
III	God Creates Adam and Eve	Cardmakers
IV	Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden	Fullers
V	Man's Disobedience and Fall	Cowpers
VI	Adam and Eve Driven from Eden	Armourers
VII	Sacrificium Cayme et Abell	Gloveres
VIII	Building of the Ark	Shipwrites
IX	Noah and the Flood	Fysshers and Marynars
X	Abraham's Sacrifice	Parchmyners and Bokebynders
XI	The Israelites in Egypt, the Ten Plagues' and the Passage of the Red Sea	The Hoseers
XII	Annunciation and visit of Elizbeth to Mary	Spicers
XIII	Joseph's Trouble about Mary	Pewtereres and Foundours
XIV	Journey to Bethlehem; Birth of Jesus	Tille-thekers
XV	The Angels and the Shepherds	Chaundelers
XVI	Coming of the Three Kings to Herod	Masonns
XVII	Coming of the Three Kings, the Adoration	Goldsmyths
XVIII	Flight into Egypt	Marchallis
XIX	Massacre of the Innocents	Gyrdillers and Naylers
XX	Christ with the Doctors in the Temple	Sporiers and lorimers
XXI	Baptism of Jesus	Barbours

XXII	Temptation of Jesus	Smythis
XXIII	The Transfiguration	Coriours
XXIV	Woman Taken in Adultery; Raising of Lazarus	Cappemakers
XXV	Entry into Jerusalem	Skynners
XXVI	Conspiracy to Take Jesus	Cutteleres
XXVII	The Last Supper	Baxteres
XXVIII	The Agony and Betrayal	Cordewaners
XXIX	Peter Denies Jesus; Jesus Examined by Caiaphas	Bowers and Flechers
XXX	Dream of Pilate's Wife; Jesus before Pilate	Tapiteres and Couchers
XXXI	Trial before Herod	Lytsteres
XXXII	Second Accusation before Pilate; Remorse of Judas; Purchase of Field of Blood	Cokis and Waterlederes
XXXIII	Second Trial continues; Judgment on Jesus	Tyllemakers
XXXIV	Christ Led up to Calvary	Sherman
XXXV	Crucifixio Christi	Pynneres and Paynters
XXXVI	Mortificacio Christi	Bocheres
XXXVII	Harrowing of Hell	Sadilleres
XXXVIII	Resurrection; Fright of the Jews	Carpenteres
XXXIX	Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection	Wyne-drawers
XL	Travellers to Emmaus	The Sledmen
XLI	Purification of Mary; Simeon and Anna Prophesy	Hatmakers, Masons and Laborers.
XLII	Incredulity of Thomas	Escreveneres
XLIII	The Ascension	Tailoures
XLIV	Descent of the Holy Spirit	Potteres
XLV	The Death of Mary	Drapers
XLVI	Appearance of Our Lady to Thomas	Wefferes
XLVII	Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin	Osteleres
XLVIII	The Judgment Day	Merceres

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Anderson, M.D. *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches.* Cambridge University Press, 1963.

Axton, Richard and John Stevens, trans. *Medieval French Plays.* Oxford, Blackwell, 1971.

Bevington, David, *Medieval Drama.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975.

Blashfield, Evangeline. *Hroswitha: her Portraits and her Backgrounds.* New York, 1917.

Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy.* Translated from the Latin by Richard Green. Indianapolis, The Library of Liberal Arts, 1962.

Bonfante, Larissa, trans. *The Plays of Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim.* New York, 1979.

Boughner, Daniel, *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy: A Study in Comparative Drama from Aristophanes to Shakespeare.* University of Minneapolis Press, 1954.

Bovie, P, C. Carrier and D. Parker. *The Complete Comedies of Terence.* New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1974.

Burton, E.J. *The British Theatre: Its Repertory and Practice 1100 - 1900 A.D.* London, 1960.

Butler, Marguerite. *Hrotsvitha: the Theatricality of Her Plays.* New York: Philosophical Library, 1976.

Butler's Lives of the Saints. Edited, revised and supplemented by Herbert Thurston, S.J. and Donald Attwater. Aberdeen University Press, 1956.

Cargill, Oscar. *Drama and Liturgy.* New York: Octagon Books, 1969.

Cayley, C.M. ed., *Representative English Comedies.* New York, 1903-14.

Cox, J.D. and D.S. Kastan, eds. *A New History of Early English Drama*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Craig, Hardin. *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages.* Oxford, 1955.

Chambers, E.K. *The Mediaeval Stage* . Oxford University Press, 1903/1978.

Cushman, L.W. *The Devil and the Vice in the English Dramatic Literature Before Shakespeare*. Halle, 1960.

Davidson, Clifford, ed. *A Middle English Treatis on the Playing of Miracles*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981.

Davis, Norman. *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*. EETS, SS 1, London, 1970.

Delahaye, Hippolyte. *The Legends of the Saints*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1961.

Dessen, Alan C. *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Plays.* Lincoln, Ne.:University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Dorey, T.A. and Donald R. Dudley, eds. *Roman Drama*. New York: Basic Books, 1965.

Dronke, Peter. *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

_____ *Women Writers of the Middle Ages.* Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Duckworth, George. *The Nature of Roman Comedy.* Princeton University Press, 1952.

Gasner, John, ed. *Medieval and Tudor Drama.* New York: Bantam, 1963.

Gautier, Léon. *Histoire de la Poésie Liturgique Au Moyen Age: Les Tropes.* Paris 1886.

Haight, A.L. *Hroswitha of Gandersheim: Her Life, Times and Works.* New York: The Hroswitha Club, 1965.

Halevy, Miriam. *The Evolution of Medieval Drama.* London: A Jewish Quarterly Publication, 1974.

Hallett, Charles A.and Elaine S. Hallett. *Shakespeare's Action: Scene Versus Sequence*. Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Hazlitt, W.C. *A Select Collection of Old English Plays originally published by Robert Dodsley in the year 1744*, 4th ed. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1964.

Heinemann, Keith. *The Coventry Plays.* London 1981.

Herrick, Marvin. *Tragicomedy: its origin and development in Italy.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962.

Hubert, Judd D. *Metatheatre: The Example of Shakespeare*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.

Kahrl, Stanley J. *Traditions of Medieval English Drama.* University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974.

Kolve, V.A. *The Play Called Coropus Christi.* Stanford, 1966.

Kuehne, O.R. *A Study of the Thaïs Legend with Special Reference to Hrotsvitha's "Paphnutius."* Philadelphia, 1922.

Leyser, K.J. *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.

Lumiansky and Mills. *The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983.

Miller, Norma. *Plays and Fragments.* London: Penguin, 1987.

Millett, Bella and Jocelyn Wogan, eds. *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Moore, J.B. *The Comic and the Realistic in English Drama.* New York: Russell and Russell, 1965.

Muir, F. *The Frank Muir Book: An Irreverent Companion to Social History.* London: Wm Heineman, 1976.

Nagler, A.M. *The Medieval English Stage: Shapes and Phantoms.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

Nichols, F.M. *The Marvels of Rome: Mirabilia Urbis Romae*. New York: Italica Press, 1986.

Norris, Edwin, ed. and trans. *The Ancient Cornish Drama*. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968.

Paterno, S. *The Litugical Context of Early European Drama.* Potomac, Maryland: Scripta Humanistica, 1989.

The Play of AntiChrist. Translated by John Wright. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967.

Pollard, A.W. *English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923.

Reynolds, L.D. *Texts and Transmission*. Oxford, 1983.

Righter, Anne. *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1962.

Rose, Mark. *Shakespearean Design.* Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1972.

Roston, Murray, *Biblical Drama in England.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968.

St. John, Christopher. *The Plays of Roswitha.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1923.

Salter, F.M. *Mediaeval Drama in Chester*. Toronto University Press, 1955.

Savage, Anne and Nicholas, trans. *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works*. New York: Paulist Press, 1991.

Segal, Erich, trans. *Plautus: Four Comedies*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

_____ *Roman Laughter.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Slater, N.W. *Plautus in Performance.* Princeton University Press, 1985.

Spivack, Bernard. *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil.* New York: Columbia University Press 1958.

Spivack, Charlotte. *The Comedy of Evil on Shakespeare's Stage.* London: Associated University Press, 1978.

Sticca, Sandro, ed. *Saints: studies in Hagiography.* Binghamton, N.Y.:Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996.

Taylor, Jerome, and Alan Nelson, eds. *Mediaeval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual.* Chicago, 1972.

Thompson, H.J. trans. *Prudentius,* 2 vols. London: Heinemann, 1949.

Tunison, J.S. *Dramatic Traditions of the Dark Ages.* New York, 1907/1970.

Tydeman, William. *English Medieval Theatre: 1400-1500.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

Vince, Ronald W. *Ancient and Medieval Theatre: A Historiographical Handbook.* London: Greenwood Press, 1984.

von Winterfeld, Paulus. *Hrosvithae Opera.* Berlin, 1902.

Voragine, Jacobus de, *The Golden Legend.* Translated by Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperges. New York, 1969.

Wickham, Glynne, *Early English Stages 1300 - 1660.* New York, 1963.

Williams, A. *The Characterization of Pilate in the Towneley Plays.* East Lansing, Mich., 1950.

Wilson, Katharina M. *The Dramas of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim.* Muenster, Saskatchewan: St. Peter's Press, 1985.

_____ ed. *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim; Rara Avis in Saxonia?* Ann Arbor: Marc, 1987.

_____ *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: The Ethics of Authorial Stance.* Leiden: Brill, 1988.

Young, Karl. *The Drama of the Medieval Church.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933.

Woolf, Rosemary. *The English Mystery Plays.* London, 1972.

ARTICLES

Bean, J. "Terence Chastened: Two Character Types from the Plays of Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim." *Michigan Academician* 16.3 (Spring 1984): 383-390.

_____ "Is That You.Boethius? The use of Boethius for fun and profit in the plays of Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim." (Paper presented at The Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters. Spring, 1984).

Boughner, D.C. "The Braggart in Italian Renaissance Comedy." *PMLA*. 58 (1943): 42-83.

Case, Sue-Ellen, "Re-viewing Hrotsvith." *Theatre Journal*. 35 (Dec. 1983): 533-42.

Chamberlain, David. "Musical Learning and Dramatic Action and Hrotsvit's *Paphnutius.*" *Studies in Philology.* 77 (1980) 319-43.

Coffman, George R. "A new Approach to Medieval Latin Drama." *Modern Philology* 23.3 (Feb. 1925): 256-262.

Coulter, Cornelia. "The 'Terentian' Comedies of a Tenth-Century Nun." *The Classical Journal*. 24 (1929): 528.

Ehwald, Rudolfus, ed. "De Virginitate". *Monumenta Germaniae Historica.* Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961, vol.25, 303-307.

Hanson, J.A. "Scholarship on Plautus." *Classical World.* 59 (1965-6): 101-141.

Hozeski, Bruce W. "The Parallel Patterns in Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim and Hildegarde of Bingen." *Annuale Mediaevale*. 18 (1977): 42-53.

Newlands, Carole E. "Hrotswitha's Debt to Terence." *Transactions of the American Philological Association.* 116 (1986): 369-391.

Staines, David. "To Out - Herod Herod: The Development of a Dramatic Character." *Comparative Drama.* 10 (1976): 29-53.

Sticca, Sandro. "Hrotswitha's 'Dulcitius' and Christian Symbolism," *Medieval Studies.* 32 (1970):108-127.

_____ "Sacred Drama and Comic Realism in the Plays of Hrotswitha of Gandersheim" in *The Early Middle Ages,* ed. Snyder, William H., 117-143. Binghamton: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982.

Wood, F. "The Comic Element in the English Mystery Plays." *Neophilologus.* 25 (1940): 39-48 & 194-206.

Woolf, Rosemary. "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature." *Review of English Studies.* New Series, 13.49 (1962): 1-16.

Zeydel E.H. "The Authenticity of Hrotsvitha's Works." *Modern Language Notes,* 61 (1946): 382-385.

_____ "Were Hrotsvitha's dramas performed during her Lifetime?" *Speculum,* Vol. 20.34 (Oct. 1945): 443-456.