2

Plautus and Hannibal

Introduction

The comedies of Plautus—in so far as we can date them—were composed during the course of and in the sixteen years immediately after the Second Punic War.[1] The plays themselves contain occasional references to the fact that the state is at arms but only once is that enemy specified as Carthage and not Macedon or the other Greek states with whom Rome became entangled in the years after 200 BC.[2] One work, the *Poenulus*, takes a specifically Carthaginian theme and engages most surprisingly with characteristic views of Rome's great foe. This will therefore occupy a significant though secondary position in my argument. More broadly, I hope to identify a pervasive Hannibalic impact on the entire œuvre of Plautus. In doing so I will return to one of the most famous and most important modifications which Plautus makes to his Greek originals, and one which most clearly bears the stamp of the historical moment of composition: the celebration of the slave as trickster and the metaphorical figuration of his role as that of a general and of his machinations as military manœuvres. My purpose in doing so is to point to a crucial area of instability which has much to say about the relationship between comedy and history.

The Plautine Slave and History

The Roman genre of *comoedia palliata* involves the translation and adaptation of the classics of Greek New Comedy, most notably the works of Menander, Diphilus, and Philemon.[3] The degree, nature, and extent

[1] For dating and the problem of topicality, see Introduction, pp. 20–3.

[2] Plaut. *Cist.* 197–202, esp. 202, 'ut vobis victi Poeni poenas sufferant', is the one explicit allusion to the ongoing 2nd Punic War. For other references to Rome at war, see Plaut. *Amph.* 39–45, *Asin.* 14–15, *Capt.* 67–8, *Cas.* 87–8, *Rud.* 82 and the discussion at Perna (1955) 179–80.

[3] The work with which the first half of this chapter is most closely engaged, the *Poenulus*,

of adaptation varies from writer to writer. In the case of Plautus, a significant feature is the elaboration of the role of the wily slave or *servus callidus*, a figure of such brilliance that he can take control of the entire course of the drama and whose triumph the comedy is destined to depict.[4] That slave frequently transcends his lowly status by means of transformation or identification. He can become a teacher, an actor-manager, a philosopher, or a priest.[5] Most importantly, his exploits can become subject to a pervasive military metaphor and he can turn into a Homeric hero, an Alexander, a consul, or a great Roman general. These are some of the central claims of Fraenkel's 1922 *Plautinisches in Plautus*, revised in 1960 as *Elementi plautini in Plauto*, and have only been reinforced by subsequent papyrus finds from Greek New Comedy.[6] Challenges to Fraenkel's case have been rare and unsuccessful and it continues to command general assent.[7]

The dominant concern of Plautine scholarship remains the meticulous analysis of the process of adaptation. Broader issues of cultural history and of the relationship of comedy to the world of mid-Republican Rome are very much a secondary consideration. Even Fraenkel, whose analysis of the slave as general reveals so impressive a knowledge of Livy and of the history of the period, restricts himself to pragmatic theatrical considerations when he sets out to explain the phenomenon: the elaboration of the slave as hero panders to the need of the unsophisticated Roman audience for greater colour, less subtle distinctions than the Greek audience of Menander, and meets the ambitions of the *dominus gregis* to elaborate his own role.[8] Nor do empirical

is probably based on the *Karchedonios* of Alexis. See the arguments of Arnott (1996) 284–7, 740–1.

[4] For possible wily slaves and military imagery in Livius Andronicus, Naevius, and Ennius, see Wright (1974) 18–19, 47–52, 63–4. Wright argues persuasively for a Roman comic tradition to which Plautus adheres and which the more determinedly Attic Terence rejects. In this context, Wright (1974) 96–7, 105–6, 116–17, and 123 on Caecilius are particularly valuable. Note esp. Caecil. *com.* 229 = Fest. p. 400 L: 'nunc meae militiae, Astutia, [te] opus est subcenturiare', cf. Ter. *Phorm.* 229–30, 'nunc prior adito tu, ego in insidiis hic ero | succenturiatus, siquid deficias.'

[5] On this point, see Wright (1975).

[6] Fraenkel (1960) 223–41. All references are to the Italian translation which contains various addenda and important modifications of Fraenkel's initial view of other issues, most notably the theory of *contaminatio*. For military metaphors applied to servile intrigue, see also Brotherton (1926) 63–9.

[7] Dumont (1966) suggests that Fraenkel underestimates the degree of servile machination and military imagery in Greek New Comedy but adduces too little evidence to support this claim. For criticism of Dumont and a reassertion of Fraenkel's position, see MacCary (1969) esp. 292–3. See also the intelligent remarks of Segal (1987) 128–31 and Pansiéri (1997) 679–89.

[8] Fraenkel (1960) 239–41.

historians of ancient slavery offer much more. Confronted with the figure of the slave as general, Spranger can only conclude that this has no relevance to the life or mentality of the average Roman slave and that the metaphor appeals to undefined concerns of the Roman audience of the time of the Second Punic War.[9]

This chapter, therefore, is about the Plautine slave and history. I am convinced that the Plautine moment and the Hannibalic moment coincide and the two major themes which I mean to address are both resonant of the shock of the Second Punic War. The Plautus who emerges from this investigation is one whose comedies persistently touch the rawest of nerves in the audience for whom he writes.[10]

Gracchus and the 'Volones'

The arming of slaves is a matter of recurrent concern in Roman politics. One need think only of Catiline and of Sextus Pompeius to realize the opprobrium which such procedures could incur.[11] It might therefore be asked whether the comic slave decked out in a full array of military metaphors does not have that power to provoke laughter which only truly anxious experiences enjoy. For this anxiety was all too fresh for the Roman audience of Plautus and it is indicative of quite how desperate a situation Rome reached at the worst of the Second Punic War that she was driven to enrol slaves into the legions and to promise them their freedom as a reward for service.[12] The army of 'volones' was enrolled in the aftermath of Cannae, served with distinction under Ti.

[9] Spranger (1984) 39–42.

[10] For a serious study of the Plautine slave and history, see Parker (1989), esp. pp. 233–40. Parker stresses the prominence of crucifixion jokes as a working through of the anxieties provoked by the massive increase in the Roman slave population in the years of the Punic Wars and by the slave revolts recorded at Liv. 22. 33. 2, 32. 26. 4–18, 33. 36. 1–3, 39. 29. 8–10.

[11] For Catiline, see Sall. *Catil.* 24. 4, 44. 5, 46. 3, 50. 1, cf. 56. 5; McGushin (1977) 162–3, 220–2; Syme (1964) 82. For the arming of slaves by Sextus Pompeius in the Sicilian War, see Aug. *RG* 25. 1; Hor. *epod.* 9. 7–10; Manil. 1. 919–21; Luc. 1. 43; Vell. 2. 73. 3; D.C. 48. 19. 4, 49. 12. 4; Syme (1939) 228. Suet. *Aug.* 16 reports that Octavian manumitted 20,000 slaves so that they might legitimately serve in the same war.

[12] Liv. 24. 14. 3–16. 19 stresses that the 'volones' served as slaves and only received their freedom as a reward for the victory at Beneventum. See also Isid. *orig.* 9. 3. 38 who emphasizes the exceptional nature of this procedure. This is an important matter and obscured in some later sources where freedom follows directly on enlistment. Rouland (1977) 45–56 discusses the issue well and argues strongly for manumission only after successful service. So too Welwei (1988) 7–8, 11.

Sempronius Gracchus, and features prominently in Livy's account.[13] Sources for this episode frequently express shock at such a measure.[14]

The greatest success of Gracchus and the 'volones' came at Beneventum in 214 BC.[15] Crucial here, and immensely suggestive for the role of the slave in Plautine comedy, is the account of the aftermath of this battle offered at Livy 24. 16. 14–19:

signum deinde colligendi vasa dedit; militesque praedam portantes agentesque per lasciviam ac iocum ita ludibundi Beneventum rediere ut ab epulis per celebrem festumque diem actis non ex acie reverti viderentur. Beneventani omnes turba effusa cum obviam ad portas exissent, complecti milites, gratulari, vocare in hospitium. apparata convivia omnibus in propatulo aedium fuerant; ad ea invitabant Gracchumque orabant ut epulari permitteret militibus; et Gracchus ita permisit, si in publico epularentur omnes ante suas quisque fores. prolata omnia. pilleati aut lana alba velatis capitibus volones epulati sunt, alii accubantes, alii stantes, qui simul ministrabant vescebanturque. digna res visa ut simulacrum celebrati eius diei Gracchus, postquam Romam rediit, pingi iuberet in aede Libertatis quam pater eius in Aventino ex multaticia pecunia faciendam curavit dedicavitque.

He then gave the signal to pack baggage, and the soldiers carrying and driving their booty returned with sport and mirth so gaily to Beneventum that they seemed to be returning from a feast on a day of general festivity, not from a battle. All the people of Beneventum, having come out *en masse* to the gates to meet them, embraced the soldiers, congratulated them, invited them into their houses. Feasts had been made ready by all in the atria of their houses. To these they invited the soldiers and implored Gracchus to allow the soldiers to feast. And Gracchus did permit them, provided they all feasted in the open, each before the door of his house. Wearing caps or white woollen headbands the volunteers feasted, some reclining, and some standing served and ate at the same time. This seemed to deserve the order Gracchus gave on his return to Rome for a representation of that day of festivity to be painted in the Temple of Liberty which his father, with money yielded by fines, caused to be built on the Aventine and dedicated.[16]

[13] Liv. 22. 57. 11–12, 23. 35. 6–7, 24. 10. 3, 24. 14. 3–16. 19, 25. 6. 21–2, 25. 20. 4, 25. 22. 3–4, 26. 2. 9–11, 27. 38. 8, 27. 38. 10, 28. 10. 11, 28. 46. 13, 29. 5. 9, 34. 6. 12, 13, and 17–18. See also Val. Max. 7. 6. 1; Flor. 1. 22. 23, 1. 22. 30; Sil. 10. 643–6; Frontin. *strat.* 4. 7. 24; Eutr. 3. 10. 3; Macr. *Sat.* 1. 11. 30; Fest. p. 511 L; App. *Hann.* 27; Zonar. 9. 2.

[14] See esp. Val. Max. 7. 6. 1; Sil. 10. 643–6; Flor. 1. 22. 30; Eutr. 3. 10. 3. It may legitimately be asked to what extent these sources reflect feelings at the time, but their evidence must at least be considered. Hunt (1998) 206–9 refers only to Livy.

[15] Liv. 24. 14. 3–16. 19.

[16] De Sanctis (1968) iii. 2. 249 and n. 118 argues that the claim at Liv. 24. 16. 12–13 that those 'volones' who did not show courage at Beneventum were ordered to eat standing up for the rest of the campaign is an annalistic embellishment based on misinterpretation of

Livy emphasizes the exuberant festivities of the slaves as they return from battle. Such scenes are frequently represented by Plautus, most notably in the *Persa*,[17] *Pseudolus*,[18] and *Stichus*.[19] In the *Pseudolus*, the celebrations of the slave are cast as a triumph,[20] which effectively hijacks the birthday party which Ballio proclaims at the opening of the play,[21] and will presumably totter on into the Dionysia which Calidorus anticipates for the following day.[22] In the *Persa* and *Stichus*, the slaves are granted or grant themselves an Eleutheria, that is, a festival of freedom.[23] The *Epidicus*, which features one of the great tricksters and slave generals, closes with the formal manumission of its hero.[24] So much was there for all to see acted out on the comic stage. Had the same spectators chosen to wend their way home via the Temple of Liberty, they might have taken in a painting of an oddly similar scene: slave soldiers wearing the cap or the woollen headband of freedom, some reclining, some standing, all feasting, all playful and festive. This is the happy ending to the recruitment of the 'volones'. Even so, the sting, the fear of slaves in arms cannot but remain.

Playing Punic

In 54 BC, Cicero undertook the defence of M. Aemilius Scaurus on a charge of extortion while serving as propraetor of Sardinia. Numerous representatives of his former subjects came forward to testify against him. *Pro Scauro* 42 is Cicero's response to their evidence:

> fallacissimum genus esse Phoenicum omnia monumenta vetustatis atque omnes historiae nobis prodiderunt. ab his orti Poeni multis Karthaginiensium rebellionibus, multis violatis fractisque foederibus nihil se degenerasse

the seated and standing slaves on the painting at Liv. 24. 16. 18. There is, however, little to commend the claim of Welwei (1988) 9–10 that the painting did not depict events at Beneventum at all but rather a generalized scene of liberation.

[17] Plaut. *Persa* 753–858; Woytek (1982) 30–3.
[18] Plaut. *Pseud.* 1246–1335.
[19] Plaut. *Stich.* 641–775; Petersmann (1973) 30–2.
[20] Plaut. *Pseud.* 1051.
[21] Plaut. *Pseud.* 165.
[22] Plaut. *Pseud.* 59 with Willcock (1987) ad loc.
[23] Plaut. *Persa* 29, *Stich.* 421–2. Williams (1968) 290 interprets the reference to the Eleutheria in the *Persa* as a reference to the festival of Zeus Eleutherios in commemoration of Plataea which Plautus has drawn directly from his original without any concern to render it intelligible to his audience. I would argue, however, that Toxilus engages in a self-consciously Greek festival of personal freedom in the absence of his master, and that this has no more need to refer to a specific Greek festival than does the reference to the Alcedonia at Plaut. *Cas.* 26. For developments of the Eleutheria across time, see Petersmann (1973) at Plaut. *Stich.* 421–2.
[24] Plaut. *Epid.* 730, 732, cf. *Mil.* 1193–4.

> docuerunt. a Poenis admixto Afrorum genere Sardi non deducti in Sardiniam atque ibi constituti, sed amandati et repudiati coloni.

> All the records and histories of past ages have established for us the tradition that the Phoenicians are the most deceitful of nations. The Poeni, their offshoots, proved by the many warlike outbreaks of the Carthaginians, and by their repeated violation and infringement of treaties, that they had not degenerated from their forefathers. The Sardinians, who are sprung from the Poeni with an admixture of African blood, were not planted in Sardinia and settled there, but rather marooned there as undesirables.

If the Phoenicians therefore are the most deceitful race on earth, what trust can be placed in the words of Sardinians, who share their blood but actually surpass them in villainy? Case closed. This construction of Punic character is commonplace in Cicero,[25] and indeed, as his reference to the records and histories of antiquity implies, in Latin writing in general.[26] It is also a characteristic shared with the slave-hero of Roman comedy. Later in this chapter, therefore, I wish to question whether the explosion of tricksterism in the Plautine version of the comic slave can be taken as a manifestation of the Hannibalic moment. In short, is the slave as general a less securely Roman figure than might be imagined? For all his talk of auspices, legions, centuries, and triumphs, does his constant resort to every mode of intrigue reveal the characteristic methods of, and betray an obsession with, the great Punic enemy himself?

The earliest extant evidence for Roman views of Carthaginians stems from vv. 104–13 of the *Poenulus*.[27] Here already, however, the speaker of the prologue constructs his Carthaginian in terms of a stereotype with which he can count on his audience to be familiar:

> sed pater illarum Poenus, postquam eas perdidit,
> mari terraque usquequaque quaeritat.
> ubi quamque in urbem est ingressus, ilico
> omnes meretrices, ubi quisque habitant, invenit;
> dat aurum, ducit noctem, rogitat postibi

[25] Cic. *off.* 1. 38, 1. 108, *inv.* 1. 71, *leg. agr.* 2. 95.
[26] For this unity of perspective, see Burck (1943) 300–1. This is a useful collection of material on Roman attitudes to Carthaginians, but note also p. 321 on cunning as 'diesen so richtig erkannten semitischen Zug'. Good to know that Prof. Burck made his contribution to the war effort. For suggestions that the prejudicial view of the Phoenician as trickster is already present in Greek literature, see Prandi (1979). The material gathered in Dubuisson (1983) is disappointingly thin and the table and references at 166–7 occasionally misleading.
[27] Burck (1943) 301–3 examines images of the Carthaginian in early Latin literature but overlooks Plautus entirely.

> unde sit, quoiatis, captane an surrupta sit,
> quo genere gnata, qui parentes fuerint.
> ita docte atque astu filias quaerit suas.
> et is omnis linguas scit, sed dissimulat sciens
> se scire: Poenus plane est. quid verbis opust?

But their Carthaginian father ever since they disappeared has kept searching for them everywhere by sea and land. On reaching any city, he at once hunts up all the harlots at their homes; he pays his money, hires one for the night, and then inquires where she is from, what country, whether she was captured in war or kidnapped, who her family and parents were. So cleverly and cunningly does he seek his daughters. He knows all languages too, but, knowing, dissembles his knowledge. A Carthaginian complete! Why say more?

Punic cunning is first emphasized through the *astutia* with which the father seeks his daughter.[28] And indeed there is an obvious cunning in turning one's dutiful search for lost kin into a grand tour of Mediterranean prostitution. The implication that Hanno may even risk sleeping with his own daughters perhaps finds some echo later on in the play in the salacious attitude he takes to the rediscovered Anterastilis and Adelphasium.[29] No less striking is the reference to the linguistic dexterity of the Carthaginian and his ability to dissimulate such abilities and it is this claim in particular which the rest of the play will develop.[30]

Hanno enters the *Poenulus* only late on in the drama but his linguistic capabilities are exploited to comic effect from the off. For the entry monologue of the Carthaginian as transmitted in the manuscript tradition consists of two versions of the same speech in Punic (930–9 and 940–9) followed by its translation into Latin (950–60).[31] This has provoked much speculation as to which of these three speeches is authentically Plautine but I would argue that there are good dramatic reasons to assume that one of the two Punic speeches was followed by the Latin: broad humour and the shock of exoticism are provided by Hanno's foreign garb and foreign tongue; necessary intelligibility and the reminder of the linguistic dexterity with which the prologue credits him emerge through the Latin.[32]

The establishment that Hanno has a full command of Latin makes immediate sense of the subsequent scene: the young Agorastocles and his servile henchman Milphio, whose machinations have dominated the early scenes of the play, return to the stage and Hanno is thrilled by the conversation he overhears.[33] In particular, he takes heart from the revelation that there are two freeborn, kidnapped Carthaginian girls in the vicinity and that Agorastocles is their fellow-countryman.[34] It is surely this discovery which prompts Hanno's resolution to address the pair in Punic but to switch to Latin should he receive no reply.[35] Before, however, he can put his plan into action, he is privy to a further significant revelation: Agorastocles and Milphio confer as to how to

[28] Cf. Liv. 35. 14. 12 for Hannibal answering Scipio 'Punico astu'.

[29] Franko (1995*b*) and (1996) 429–30 interprets Plaut. *Poen.* 106–10 as implying that Hanno sleeps with all the prostitutes he encounters before asking them where they come from and cites *Poen.* 1217–18 and 1297 as examples of louche behaviour even after he knows that Anterastilis and Adelphasium are his daughters. However, the conviction that 'ducit noctem' can only mean 'spends the night' is unfounded. Although it has this sense at Verg. *georg.* 3. 379 and Prop. 4. 6. 85, Maurach (1988) at v. 108 is surely right to point to the passages collected at *TLL* 5. 1. 2143. 53–64 and translate 'ducit noctem' as 'hires a girl for the night'. On this reading, once Hanno has paid for the girl, he is free to sleep with her or to interrogate her as he pleases. Henderson (1999) 16–17 makes the same assumptions as Franko.

[30] Opelt (1966) 438–42 suggests that Plaut. *Poen.* 112–13 contradicts 106–11, in that the earlier lines suggest frank questioning rather than secret overhearing, and argues that the 'et' with which 112 opens is lame. She therefore suggests that vv. 112–13, 930–49, and 982–1038 are inauthentic interpolations stemming from a reperformance shortly before the Third Carthaginian War. However, though Opelt is probably right to suggest that vv. 112–13 point to a stereotypical, hostile view of Carthaginians, it is far less clear that vv. 982–1038 sustain rather than subvert this position. Moreover, even if these verses are all interpolations, this in no way detracts from their value as historical evidence or their contribution to the wit and intellectual complexity of the play.

[31] Opelt (1966) 435 notes that, though the first Punic speech is absent from the Ambrosian palimpsest, it is deemed to contain a purer and older Punic.

[32] For a similar view, see Starks (2000) 170. Gratwick (1971) 32–5 suggests that the Latin version of the monologue at 950–60 is dramatically unnecessary and that all essential information can be inferred by the audience on the strength of costume, appearance, gesture, the reference to Antidamas at vv. 934 and 944, and of what they have previously learned. By contrast, Zwierlein (1990) 178–93 deletes both Punic monologues on the grounds that they are incompatible with the Latin soliloquies of Hanno at 967–70, 982–4 and 988–9 and that they are not as readily intelligible as Gratwick hopes; he further removes 952–4 from the Latin monologue on account of what he sees as an uneasy link to 950–1 and the problem that Hanno is nowhere else described as searching for his nephew. I am in no position to judge between the two Punic versions of the monologue but would argue strongly for the retention of either 930–9 or 940–9 followed by 950–60 for the reasons given above. The fact that Hanno's further asides are only in Latin is a matter of simple dramatic economy.

[33] Plaut. *Poen.* 961–70.

[34] Plaut. *Poen.* 962–3, 'ingenuas ambas surrupticias | Carthaginiensis', cf. 965 'tuas . . . popularis'. The Carthaginian origins of Agorastocles perhaps also colour his exchange with Milphio at Plaut. *Poen.* 975–80: the slave thinks that he looks like a bird and calls him a 'gugga'; the master just recognizes him as a Punic.

[35] Plaut. *Poen.* 982–4. Zwierlein (1990) 184–5 argues for the deletion of 982–4 on the grounds that these lines should introduce an immediate approach on the part of Hanno when in fact he remains a passive listener for another 10 lines save for a further Latin aside at 988–9 and that they sound stiff and naïve. They are, however, fully motivated by what he has learnt from 961–81 and the failure immediately to follow through the resolution may be explained by what he now overhears at 985–7.

communicate with him and Agorastocles is forced to confess that he was stolen from Carthage at the age of 6 and has no memory of his mother-tongue.[36] The Carthaginian shudders to hear a sadly familiar tale.[37] The slave, unabashed, offers to address the stranger in Punic,[38] and, when asked whether he knows any of the language, replies that no Punic is more Punic than him today (*nullus me est hodie Poenus Poenior*).[39]

The scene has now reached a crucial turning point. While Milphio's last claim might suggest that he is an expert in Punic, his true abilities are rather more limited: he offered to address the Carthaginian and the one word of Punic he turns out to know is precisely the address *avo*.[40] The rest of the question which Agorastocles bids Milphio put to Hanno is necessarily delivered in Latin, and this should perhaps warn Hanno not to expect much from his interlocutor.[41] Yet he chooses to reply in Punic and continues to do so until the shameless incompetence of the translations which Milphio supplies to Agorastocles prompts the following angry exchange, *Poenulus* 1029–38:

> HANN. at ut scias, nunc dehinc latine iam loquar.
> servom hercle te esse oportet et nequam et malum,
> hominem peregrinum atque advenam qui inrideas.
> MIL. at hercle te hominem et sycophantam et subdolum,
> qui huc advenisti nos captatum, migdilix,
> bisulci lingua quasi proserpens bestia.
> AG. maledicta hinc aufer, linguam compescas face.
> maledicere huic tu temperabis, si sapis.
> meis consanguineis nolo te iniuste loqui.
> Carthagini ego sum gnatus, ut tu sis sciens.

HANN. Well, so that you may understand it, I shall now speak Latin for the future. A good-for-nothing rascal of a slave you must be, by gad, to make fun of a gentleman and a stranger here.

MIL. Well, by Hercules, and a swindling sharper of a gentleman you must be, to come here to trap us, you migsture, with a two-forked tongue like a creeping beast.

AG. None of your insults! Control that tongue of yours! You'll refrain from insulting this gentleman if you are wise. I won't hear you abusing men of my own blood. I am a native of Carthage myself, sir, I may inform you.

[36] Plaut. *Poen.* 985–7.
[37] Plaut. *Poen.* 988–9.
[38] Plaut. *Poen.* 990 'vin appellem hunc Punice?'
[39] Plaut. *Poen.* 991.
[40] See *OLD* p. 150, s.v. 'appello' 1 = 'address'. If the theory is indeed correct that Romans grew so familiar with Punic *avo* to coin their own greeting *ave* from it, this will not strike anyone as a remarkable level of proficiency. See *OLD*, p. 210, s.v. 'ave'.
[41] Plaut. *Poen.* 994: 'avo. quoiates estis aut quo ex oppido?'

This passage develops a number of important issues. In particular, it must be noted that it was Milphio who instituted the exchanges which have just broken down and that he did so in Punic first and Latin second. One might indeed ask why Hanno does not reply in Latin but the implications of his indignation are that he was led to believe that Milphio genuinely could communicate in Punic only to be infuriated by the slave's impertinent mistranslations of his words. Milphio in turn, on discovering that the stranger is indeed a Latinist, immediately falls back on a number of insults which echo the warnings of the prologue: the Carthaginian, he infers, has deliberately disguised his knowledge of Latin in order to perpetrate a trick. To any reader of the *Aeneid*, the attack on Hanno as with a two-forked tongue like a creeping beast (*bisulci lingua quasi proserpens bestia*) has obvious resonances. Yet where Vergil's Venus fears the sly house and fork-tongued Tyrians (*domum . . . ambiguam Tyriosque bilinguis*), stereotypical Punic perfidy is clearly the issue and bilingualism as such irrelevant.[42] In this instance, however, the one is perceived as the vehicle for the other.[43] This is an important matter and one which deserves further examination.

Commentators on *Poenulus* 112–13 do little more than refer to the general category of *Punica fides*. That these lines allude to this particular Roman prejudice is first asserted by Jachmann,[44] and little has been added to the picture since.[45] Yet, to the extent that *Punica fides* is just a synonym for *perfidia*, it can only speak effectively for the implication that the Carthaginian is a dissimulator. The specific issue of linguistic dexterity is ignored. However, further investigation of Roman experience in the Second Punic War suggests a more pointed reference. Let me begin with a passage from Zonaras, the Byzantine epitomator of Cassius Dio.[46] Zonaras 8. 24 describes the tactics employed by Hannibal at the start of his campaign in order to check on the attitudes of his polyglot and potentially fissiparous forces:

ὑποπτεύων δὲ καὶ τοὺς σφετέρους οὐδενὶ ῥαδίως ἐπίστευεν, ἀλλὰ τήν ἐσθῆτά τε μεταβάλλων καὶ κόμαις χρώμενος περιθέτοις τήν τε διάλεξιν ἄλλοτε ἄλλην ποιούμενος (ᾔδει γὰρ πλείους καὶ τὴν τῶν Λατίνων), καὶ νύκτωρ καὶ μεθ'

[42] Verg. *Aen.* 1. 661. See Horsfall (1973–4) 5.
[43] The insult can also be applied in Plautus in contexts where bilingualism is irrelevant. See e.g. Plaut. *Persa* 299 where it is used of the sharp-tongued Paegnium or *Truc.* 781 where Callicles is determined not to be deceived by his maid.
[44] Jachmann (1931) 200.
[45] See e.g. Maurach (1988) ad loc.; Prandi (1979) 90; Segal (1987) 38, Zwierlein (1990) 184.
[46] For Dio and Zonaras, see Millar (1964) 2–3.

ἡμέραν πολλὰ ἐπεσκόπει ἤκουέ τε πλεῖστα ὡς οὐκ Ἀννίβας καί τινα ὡς ἕτερός τις ἐφθέγγετο.

And suspecting his own men too, he trusted none easily, but changing his clothes and using a wig and varying the language he spoke from occasion to occasion (for he knew many, including that of the Latins), both by night and by day he would spy on many things and hear very many things pretending not to be Hannibal and would address a man in the guise of someone else.

The reference to costume change and fake wigs goes back at least as far as Polybius and it is at least striking that so skilled a practitioner of the theatre of disguise should be at work in Italy so few years before Plautus will make the same motif a central ingredient in the intrigue of the *Curculio*, *Persa*, *Trinummus*, *Miles Gloriosus*, and others.[47] More unusual is the reference to the ability of Hannibal himself as a Latinist and the exploitation of this gift in order to spy on his men.[48] However, this claim recurs at Zonaras 9. 9 and this time in a context where it can be paralleled in the wider tradition. Zonaras begins with the death of Marcellus, victim of a characteristic Punic ambush, of which more later. As in Livy and others, Hannibal seizes the signet ring of the fallen general and uses it to trick his way into a number of Italian cities. It is almost as if he has seen the *Curculio*.[49] Note now how Hannibal exploits his own knowledge of Latin and that of his allies in order to impersonate his victim:

οἱ δ' ἐν τῆι Ἰταλίαι καὶ ἐκ νόσου ἐπόνησαν καὶ μάχαις ἐταλαιπώρησαν, Τυρσηνῶν νεωτερισάντων τινῶν. μεῖζον δὲ τῶν ἄλλων αὐτοὺς ἐλύπησεν ὅτι τὸν Μάρκελλον ἀπέβαλον. ἐπιστρατεύσαντες γὰρ κατὰ τοῦ Ἀννίβου τυγχάνοντος ἐν Λοκροῖς καὶ ἄμφω οἱ ὕπατοι περιστοιχισθέντες ἐξ ἐνέδρας ὁ μὲν Μάρκελλος αὐτίκα ἀπώλετο, Κρισπῖνος δὲ τρωθεὶς ἀπέθανεν οὐ μετὰ πολύ. εὑρηκὼς δὲ τὸ τοῦ Μαρκέλλου σῶμα ὁ Ἀννίβας, καὶ τὸν δακτύλιον αὐτοῦ εἰληφὼς ὧι ἐκεῖνος τὰς γραφὰς ἐπεσφράγιζε, γράμματα ἐς τὰς πόλεις ὡς παρ' ἐκείνου στελλόμενα ἔπεμπε, καὶ ὅσα ἐβούλετο διεπράττετο· μέχρις οὗ τοῦτο γνοὺς ὁ Κρισπῖνος ἀντιπαρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς φυλάσσεσθαι· ὅθεν ἀντιπεριέστη τῶι Ἀννίβαι τὸ

[47] Plb. 3. 78. 1–4; Liv. 22. 1. 3; App. *Hann.* 6. Segal (1987) 38 notes Hannibal's employment of disguise. For the role of disguise in Plautus, see Muecke (1986).

[48] Liv. 22. 13. 6, cf. Pln. *Fab.* 6. 1–2 implies that Hannibal was a less than perfect Latin linguist. Rochette (1997) 158 and n. 39 argues on the basis of Liv. 30. 30. 1 that Hannibal probably knew no Latin but does not comment on the Zonaras passage or its relationship to Polybius.

[49] Plaut. *Curc.* 345–8, 360–1, 365, 369–70, 423–4, 549–50, 585. For signet rings and intrigue, see also Plaut. *Mil.* 771–3, 797–8, 800–1, 912–13, 930–2, 957–60, 988, 1017, 1048–9.

πρᾶγμα. ἐπεὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἐν τῆι Σαλπίαι δι' αὐτομόλου δῆθεν ἣν ἐπιστείλας, ὡς ὁ Μάρκελλος νυκτὸς προσήιει τοῖς τείχεσι, τῆι τε τῶν Λατίνων κεχρημένος φωνῆι σὺν ἄλλοις ἐπισταμένοις αὐτήν, ἵνα Ῥωμαῖοι δόξωσιν εἶναι. μαθόντες δὲ οἱ Σαλπηνοὶ τὴν ἐπιτέχνησιν αὐτοῦ ἀντετεχνήσαντο πιστεύειν ὄντως προσιέναι τὸν Μάρκελλον, καὶ ἀνασπάσαντες τὸν καταρράκτην εἰσήγαγον ὅσους αὐτοῖς ἱκανοὺς ἔδοξεν εἶναι κατεργασθῆναι παρ' αὐτῶν, καὶ πάντας ἀπέκτειναν. ὁ δὲ Ἀννίβας ἀπῆρεν αὐτίκα, μαθὼν τοὺς Λοκροὺς πολιορκουμένους ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων ἐκ Σικελίας ἐπιπλευσάντων.

The people in Italy not only suffered from disease, but also encountered hardships in battles, since some of the Etruscans had rebelled. But what grieved them more than all else was their loss of Marcellus. For both the consuls, having undertaken a campaign against Hannibal, who was at Locri, had been surrounded by an ambush, and Marcellus had perished instantly, while Crispinus had been wounded and died not long after. Hannibal found the body of Marcellus, and taking his ring with which Marcellus was accustomed to seal his documents, he forwarded letters to the cities purporting to come from Marcellus. He was accomplishing whatever he pleased, until Crispinus became aware of it and sent them a warning to be on their guard. As a result of this the tables were turned upon Hannibal. He had sent a message to the citizens of Salapia through a pretended deserter, and now approached the walls in the guise of Marcellus, using the Latin language in company with other men who understood it, in order to be taken for Romans. The Salapians, informed of his artifice, were artful enough in their turn to pretend that they believed Marcellus was really approaching. Then drawing up the portcullis they admitted as many as it seemed to them they could conveniently dispose of, and killed them all. Hannibal withdrew at once on learning that Locri was being besieged by the Romans, who had sailed against it from Sicily.

Livy and Appian both have Hannibal dress Latin speakers as Romans at Capua,[50] and tell much the same story of the ring of Marcellus and the attempt on Salapia.[51] It seems likely that it is to the memory of precisely such devices that the prologue-speaker alludes in sketching out his perfect Carthaginian. This points to a significant intersection between the figure of Hannibal in Roman tradition and the assumptions about Carthaginians which underpin the representation of Hanno in the *Poenulus*. As I have hinted, there is also a case to be made

[50] Liv. 26. 6. 11, esp. 'habitu Italico gnari Latinae linguae'; App. *Hann.* 41; Frontin. *strat.* 3. 2. 3. See also Rochette (1997) 157.

[51] For Hannibal's acquisition of the ring of Marcellus and its exploitation in intrigue, see Liv. 27. 28. 3–6; App. *Hann.* 50–1. For the use of deserters and Latin-speakers, see Liv. 27. 28. 7 and 27. 28. 9, where 'Latine omnes loquentes' are placed in the front line of the column as Hannibal approaches Salapia. App. *Hann.* 51 has him approach Salapia with Numidians dressed in Roman arms. See also Frontin. *strat.* 4. 7. 38.

for a broader link between Hannibalic tactics and the standard modes of intrigue in Plautine comedy.

When Milphio launches into his torrent of abuse, Agorastocles is quick to rebuke him and to assert his own Carthaginian descent. This is important and corresponds to the oddly liberal approach adopted by Plautus in this play, making heroes out of Carthaginians and subverting the prejudices with which both characters and audience may be inclined to view Hanno. So much is commonly agreed.[52] Yet there is another crucial point to make. When Milphio agrees to try his Punic on Hanno with the claim *nullus me est hodie Poenus Poenior*, his words refer to much more than language. Indeed, up to this point in the comedy, Milphio has spoken not a word of Punic. The only way in which he has been acting Punic 'today' has been by his persistent engagement in deception and intrigue. The words with which Agorastocles enters at the close of the prologue define Milphio as a standard wily slave of long and conspicuous service,[53] and he is soon unleashing all his *malitia*, all his *fallaciae*, all his powers of *consilium* in the plot against the pimp.[54] The implications of my analysis are further borne out by the continuation of the drama. For the very vices which the outraged Milphio attributes to Hanno at 1032–4—sharper, swindler, snake—become virtues once the Carthaginian is adopted as an ally at 1089–91:

> MIL. potin tu fieri subdolus?
> HANN. inimico possum, amico insipientia est.
> MIL. inimicus hercle est huius. HANN. male faxim lubens.

MIL. Can you become sharp?
HANN. With an enemy, yes; with a friend it's foolish.
MIL. He's an enemy of master's, by Hercules.
HANN. I should enjoy damaging him.

When Milphio goes on to suggest that Hanno pretend that Adelphasium and Anterastilis are two daughters he lost from Carthage when young and whom he is seeking, he interprets the pang of emotion with which the latter is seized as proof positive of his genius as a trickster:

> MIL. eu hercle mortalem catum,
> * malum crudumque, estolidum et subdolum.

[52] This point is stressed by Perna (1955) 74, 182; Delcourt (1964) 217; Gratwick (1982) 94; Pansiéri (1997) 462–3; Leigh (2000) 291–2; Starks (2000) 164–5, 175–7, 181–2.

[53] Plaut. *Poen.* 129–32.

[54] Plaut. *Poen.* 160–2, 180, 187–8, 193–5, 200–2, 424–6, 547–9, 576–7, 580–1, 787–8, 817, 856, 866.

> ut adflet, quo illud gestu faciat facilius.
> me quoque dolis iam superat architectonem.

MIL. Well, by Hercules, what a sly one, what a hardened rascal, unstolid, and sharp! Look at him weeping, so as to take his role more realistically! Here he is, he beats even me, the chief architect, at tricks.[55]

A major issue in this play, therefore, is the fun of 'acting Punic' and the essence of such behaviour is tricksterism. Obviously, the very title of the play inclines playwright, characters, and audience to a more direct reflection on Punic ethnicity than is the case elsewhere in Plautus' œuvre.[56] Yet the link made at 991 between acting Punic and the characteristic mode of the wily slave is suggestive for the broader experience of Plautine theatre and for the specific historical moment at which Plautus made perhaps his most significant intervention in the texts of the originals which he adapted.[57] This forms the theme of the rest of this chapter.

Fighting like a Roman

The preceding section of this argument offered a preliminary examination of stereotypical Roman views of Carthaginian ethnicity and demonstrated the exploitation of just such views in the *Poenulus* of Plautus. It further illustrated the importance of Hannibal in the creation of these stereotypes: the perfect Carthaginian of the *Poenulus* operates in a manner peculiarly reminiscent of the tactics which our sources attribute to Hannibal in the Italian campaign.

If we know what it is to play Punic, the same period also betrays considerable evidence of an attempt to construct Roman character through Roman military conduct, and Plautus is as involved in this as

[55] Plaut. *Poen.* 1107–10. The adjectives recall the praises heaped on Milphio by Agorastocles at the very start of the drama. Plaut. *Poen.* 131 praises all that he has done 'sapienter, docte et cordate et cate'. For the pang of emotion and the similarity between this scene and Men. *Sik.* 343–60, see Gratwick (1982) 101–3. Gratwick treats this as evidence of Plautine 'contaminatio'; it certainly suggests that the comic gag or routine is an important unit of composition for Plautus.

[56] The joke at Plaut. *Cas.* 67–78 turns on the assumption that all Greeks, Apulians, and Carthaginians are liars. The overlap between Greek and Punic ethnicity is a significant issue in this chapter.

[57] Franko (1994) 155 comes at the problem from the other direction when noting that an audience confronted with the title *Poenulus* 'given the features of the genre, the reputation of Plautus, and the bad connotations of the root *Poenus* . . . must have expected another Pseudolus or Epidicus'.

anyone. Consider, for instance, *Cistellaria* 197–8. Here, shortly before wishing the audience success against the Carthaginians, the prologue speaker urges:

> bene valete et vincite
> virtute vera, quod fecistis antidhac.

Farewell, and win with true virtue, as you have done up to now.

Likewise, at *Casina* 87–8, the prologue closes with the following address to the audience:

> valete, bene rem gerite et vincite
> virtute vera, quod fecistis antidhac.

Farewell, fight well and win with true virtue, as you have done up to now.

In both these cases, therefore, Plautus credits the Romans out there in the theatre with the quality of *virtus vera*, and, in the case of the *Cistellaria*, the strong implication is that it is this quality which distinguishes them from their Carthaginian foes. Nor do we lack contemporary evidence for what the Romans might mean when they claim for themselves this particular quality. For an apt summary is provided in Ennius, *Scaenica* 254–7 (Jocelyn). These lines stem from the *Phoenix* and appear to be spoken by the hero Achilles' wise old teacher:

> sed virum vera virtute vivere animatum addecet[58]
> fortiterque innoxium stare[59] adversum adversarios.
> ea libertas est qui pectus purum et firmum gestitat;
> aliae[60] res obnoxiosae nocte in obscura latent.

But it behoves a man to live a life inspired with virtue true, to stand steadfast with guiltless bravery in the face of foes. The man who bears his breast both pure and staunch—that is true liberty. All conduct else lies lurking in dim darkness, fraught with guilt.

[58] 'animatum adiecit' *VPR*; '+animatum adiecit+' *Jocelyn*; 'animatum addecet' *Carrio, Marshall.*

[59] 'innoxium vocare' *VPR*; '+innoxium vocare+' *Jocelyn*; 'innoxium + vocare' *Marshall*; 'innoxium stare' *Bentley*. My acceptance of the emendations of Carrio and Bentley is based on the important parallels at Plaut. *Pseud.* 458–61 cf. *Capt.* 664–6. At Plaut. *Pseud.* 458, Simo comments on the '*statum* . . . basilicum' of his slave and Callipho replies at 459 that 'bene confidenterque *adstitisse* intellego'. Pseudolus then states loftily at 460–1 that '*decet* innocentem servom atque *innoxium* | confidentem esse, suom apud erum potissimum'. Both Willcock (1987) at Plaut. *Pseud.* 458–61 and Lindsay (1900) at Plaut. *Capt.* 664–6 note the almost exact parallel for this exchange in the *Captivi* but neither notes the possible parody of Ennian tragic language which this implies. The kingly stance of Pseudolus at Plaut. *Pseud.* 458 suggests the grand manner of tragedy.

[60] 'aliae' *VPR*; *Marshall*; '+aliae+' *Jocelyn*.

True virtue stands its ground. Facing down the enemy, always looking forward, it has no need of the dynamic movement and covert operations of the trickster.[61] It is an appropriate virtue for the Roman legion and its collective determination to hold the line.[62]

Plautus is careful to credit his audience with particular characteristics. Crucially, these are characteristics which can best find expression—individually and collectively—in battle and as a result of the tactical decisions of the nation's generals. Moreover, in doing so he seems to touch on what other sources for the period suggest to have been an acutely contemporary concern. Three passages, in particular, stand out and these must first be set out before the relationship between them is assessed. The first is Polybius 13. 3. 1–8, in which the historian describes the tactics of Philip of Macedon *c.*205–204 BC, then contrasts them with Rome's unusual dedication to the ways of old:

ἐγένετο περὶ τὴν τοιαύτην κακοπραγμοσύνην, ἣν δὴ βασιλικὴν μὲν οὐδαμῶς οὐδεὶς ἂν εἶναι φήσειεν, ἀναγκαίαν δὲ βούλονται λέγειν ἔνιοι πρὸς τὸν πραγματικὸν τρόπον διὰ τὴν νῦν ἐπιπολάζουσαν κακοπραγμοσύνην. οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀρχαῖοι πολύ τι τοῦ τοιούτου μέρους ἐκτὸς ἦσαν· τοσοῦτο γὰρ ἀπηλλοτρίωντο τοῦ κακομηχανεῖν περὶ τοὺς φίλους χάριν τοῦ τῶι τοιούτωι συναύξειν τὰς σφετέρας δυναστείας, ὥστ' οὐδὲ τοὺς πολεμίους ἠιροῦντο δι' ἀπάτης νικᾶν, ὑπολαμβάνοντες ⟨οὐδὲν⟩ οὔτε λαμπρὸν οὐδὲ μὴν βέβαιον εἶναι τῶν κατορθωμάτων, ἐὰν μή τις ἐκ τοῦ προφανοῦς μαχόμενος ἡττήσηι ταῖς ψυχαῖς τοὺς ἀντιταττομένους. διὸ καὶ συνετίθεντο πρὸς σφᾶς μήτ' ἀδήλοις βέλεσι μήθ' ἐκηβόλοις χρήσασθαι κατ' ἀλλήλων μόνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ χειρὸς καὶ συστάδην γινομένην μάχην ἀληθινὴν ὑπελάμβανον εἶναι κρίσιν πραγμάτων. ἧι καὶ τοὺς πολέμους ἀλλήλοις προύλεγον καὶ τὰς μάχας, ὅτε πρόθοιντο διακινδυνεύειν, καὶ τοὺς τόπους ⟨εἰς⟩ οὓς μέλλοιεν ἐξιέναι παραταξόμενοι. νῦν δὲ καὶ φαύλου φασὶν εἶναι στρατηγοῦ τὸ προφανῶς τι πράττειν τῶν πολεμικῶν. βραχὺ δέ τι λείπεται παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις ἴχνος ἔτι τῆς ἀρχαίας αἱρέσεως περὶ τὰ πολεμικά· καὶ γὰρ προλέγουσι τοὺς πολέμους καὶ ταῖς ἐνέδραις σπανίως χρῶνται καὶ τὴν μάχην ἐκ χειρὸς ποιοῦνται καὶ ⟨συ⟩στάδην. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν εἰρήσθω πρὸς τὸν ἐπιπολάζοντα νῦν ὑπὲρ τὸ δέον ἐν τῆι κακοπραγμοσύνηι ζῆλον περὶ τοὺς ἡγουμένους ἔν τε ταῖς πολιτικαῖς καὶ πολεμικαῖς οἰκονομίαις.

[61] For the two modes contrasted, see Liv. 35. 4. 7, where the Gauls are driven to the plain and can no longer employ ambush: 'idem et Galli fecerunt, postquam apertas esse *insidias* et recto ac iusto proelio, ubi *vera* vinceret *virtus*, dimicandum viderunt.' For examples from various authors of the closely related antithesis between 'dolus' or 'insidiae' and 'vis aperta', see Oakley (1998) at Liv. 8. 36. 9.

[62] Jocelyn (1967) 390 compares Verg. *Aen.* 12. 694–5 and acutely suggests that 'vera virtus' should be understood not as 'true, genuine *virtus*' but as '*virtus* accompanied by a sense of fair-dealing'. He notes that the phrase becomes 'a cliche of Roman public moralising' and, in addition to the Plautus passages quoted above, cites Cic. *Pis.* 57; Liv. 4. 31. 5, 24. 14. 6; Hor. *carm.* 3. 5. 29, *epist.* 1. 1. 17, 1. 18. 8.

Philip became addicted to that kind of treacherous dealing, which no one indeed would say in any way became a king but which some maintain to be necessary in practical politics, owing to the present prevalence of treachery. The ancients, as we know, were far removed from such malpractices. For so far were they from plotting mischief against their friends with the purpose of aggrandizing their own power, that they would not even consent to get the better of their enemies by fraud, regarding no success as brilliant or secure unless they crushed the spirit of their adversaries in open battle. For this reason they entered into a convention among themselves to use against each other neither secret missiles nor those discharged from a distance, and considered that it was only a hand-to-hand battle at close quarters which was truly decisive. Hence they preceded war by a declaration, and when they intended to do battle gave notice of the fact and of the spot to which they would proceed and array their army. But at the present time they say it is a sign of poor generalship to do anything openly in war. Some slight traces, however, of the ancient principles of warfare survive among the Romans. For they make declaration of war, they seldom use ambushes, and they fight hand-to-hand at close quarters. These reflections are occasioned by the excessive prevalence among our present leaders both in the conduct of public affairs and in that of war of a keenness for treacherous dealing.

According to Polybius, old-time generals shunned deceit and covert operations in favour of a frank declaration of hostilities and a straight fight on open ground. Only in the Romans does a trace of the antique mentality endure: war is declared, ambushes are kept to a minimum, fighting is hand-to-hand.

The second passage derives from the same historian's account of Greek attitudes to Rome's resumption of hostilities against Carthage in 150–149 BC and emphasizes the distress of one group at the Romans' failure to live up to their previous standards, Polybius 36. 9. 9–11:

ἕτεροι δὲ καθόλου μὲν πολιτικὸν εἶναι τὸ Ῥωμαϊκὸν ἔθνος ἔφασαν καὶ τοῦτ' ἴδιον εἶναι καὶ ἐπὶ τούτωι σεμνύνεσθαι τοὺς Ῥωμαίους, ἐπὶ τῶι καὶ τοὺς πολέμους ἁπλῶς καὶ γενναίως πολεμεῖν, μὴ νυκτεριναῖς ἐπιθέσεσι χρωμένους μηδ' ἐνέδραις, πᾶν δὲ τὸ δι' ἀπάτης καὶ δόλου γινόμενον ἀποδοκιμάζοντας, μόνους δὲ τοὺς ἐκ προδήλου καὶ κατὰ πρόσωπον κινδύνους ὑπολαμβάνοντας αὑτοῖς καθήκειν. νῦν δὲ πάντα περὶ τοὺς Καρχηδονίους δι' ἀπάτης καὶ δόλου κεχειρικέναι, κατὰ βραχὺ τὸ μὲν προτείνοντας, τὸ δ' ἐπικρυπτομένους, ἕως οὗ παρείλαντο πάσας τὰς ἐλπίδας τοῦ βοηθεῖν αὐτοῖς τοὺς συμμάχους. τοῦτο δὲ μοναρχικῆς πραγματοποιίας οἰκεῖον εἶναι, μᾶλλον ἢ πολιτικῆς καὶ Ῥωμαϊκῆς αἱρέσεως καὶ προσεοικὸς ἀσεβήματι καὶ παρασπονδήματι κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον.

Others said that the Romans were, generally speaking, a civilized people, and that their peculiar merit on which they prided themselves was that they conducted their wars in a simple and noble manner, employing neither night attacks nor ambushes, disapproving of every kind of deceit and fraud, and considering that nothing but direct and open attacks were legitimate for them. But in the present case, throughout the whole of their proceedings in regard to Carthage, they had used deceit and fraud, offering certain things one at a time and keeping others secret, until they cut off every hope the city had of help from her allies. This, they said, savoured more of a despot's intrigue than of the principles of a civilized state such as Rome, and could only be justly described as something very like impiety and treachery.

The implication is that Rome has taken on the characteristics attributed to Philip and has lost the qualities which made her unique.

Livy 42. 47. 1–9 engages with a similar problem. Here, Q. Marcius Philippus and Aulus Atilius Serranus return to Rome from their 172–171 BC embassy to Greece and Macedonia and, granted an address to the senate on the Capitol, preen themselves on having tricked Perseus into a truce.[63] Yet Livy 42. 47. 4–9 notes the hostility to such procedures of certain older members of the senate and their claim that they are incompatible with the 'Roman arts'. These senators explicitly associate such cunning with Greeks and Carthaginians and define the true Roman way as the employment of *virtus vera*:

haec ut summa ratione acta magna pars senatus approbabat; *veteres et moris antiqui memores negabant se in ea legatione Romanas agnoscere artes.* non per *insidias* et *nocturna proelia*, nec *simulatam* fugam improvisosque ad incautum hostem reditus, nec ut *astu* magis quam *vera virtute* gloriarentur, bella maiores gessisse: indicere prius quam gerere solitos bella, denuntiare etiam interdum pugnam et locum finire, in quo dimicaturi essent. eadem fide indicatum Pyrrho regi medicum vitae eius *insidiantem*; eadem Faliscis vinctum traditum proditorem liberum; *religionis haec Romanae esse, non versutiarum Punicarum neque calliditatis Graecae, apud quos fallere hostem quam vi superare gloriosius fuerit.* interdum in praesens tempus *plus profici dolo quam virtute*; sed eius demum animum in perpetuum vinci, cui confessio expressa sit se neque arte neque casu, sed collatis comminus viribus iusto ac pio esse bello superatum. *haec seniores, quibus nova ac nimis callida minus placebat sapientia*; vicit tamen ea pars senatus, cui *potior utilis quam honesti cura* erat, ut comprobaretur prior legatio Marci, et eodem rursus in Graeciam cum *** quinqueremibus remitteretur iuberetque cetera uti e re publica maxime visum esset agere.

[63] Liv. 42. 47. 1, 'nulla re magis gloriarentur quam decepto per indutias et spem pacis rege'.

These actions a large part of the senate approved as having been done with great wisdom; the older men and those mindful of ancient custom said they did not recognize in this embassy the arts of Rome. 'Not by ambushes and battles by night,' they thought, 'nor by pretended flight and unexpected return to an enemy off his guard, nor in such a way as to boast of cunning rather than real bravery, did our ancestors wage war; they were accustomed to declare war before they waged it, and even at times to announce a battle and specify the place in which they were going to fight. With the same straightforwardness the information was given to King Pyrrhus that his physician was plotting against his life; in the same way the betrayer of their children was delivered bound to the Faliscans; these are the acts of Roman scrupulousness, not of Carthaginian artfulness nor of Greek slyness, since among these peoples it has been more praiseworthy to deceive an enemy than to conquer by force. Occasionally a greater advantage is gained for the time being by trickery than by courage, but final and lasting conquest of the spirit overtakes one from whom the admission has been extorted that he has been conquered, not by craft or accident, but by the hand-to-hand clash of force in a proper and righteous war.' Thus the older men who were less well pleased by the new and over-sly wisdom; however, that part of the senate to whom the pursuit of advantage was more important than that of honour, prevailed to the effect that the previous embassy of Marcius should be approved, and he should be sent back again to Greece with * quinqueremes and instructed to conduct further affairs as might seem best to serve the state.[64]

It is evident that the passages under consideration have many features in common. Not least amongst these is their source, for scholars have little hesitation in identifying the Polybian tone of the debate in Livy and assigning it to book 27 of the *Histories*;[65] the degree to which the passage is also profoundly Livian and represents a crucial juncture in the overall development of his work is less frequently observed.[66] What

[64] Cf. Liv. 42. 52. 8 where Perseus complains of the deceptive negotiations ('fallaci . . . colloquio') by which the Romans had drawn out the winter and won time in order to strengthen their forces. For a further account of this debate, cf. D.S. 30. 7, esp. the statement that the oldest senators disapproved of what had happened and argued that it was unfitting for Romans to imitate Carthaginians and overcome the foe by deceit and not by valour (μὴ πρέπειν Ῥωμαίοις μιμεῖσθαι Φοίνικας, ὥστε δι' ἀπάτης ἀλλ' οὐ δι' ἀρετῆς τῶν πολεμίων περιγίνεσθαι).

[65] See Walbank (1972) 175 n. 115 and Tränkle (1977) 134 and n. 6.

[66] Liv. pref. 11 describes Rome as a land richer than any other in positive historical example, and here the older men of the senate figure almost as ideal readers of his work. Liv. 1. 53. 4 damns Tarquin's capture of Gabii as 'minime arte Romana, fraude ac dolo', while Camillus refuses the offer of the treacherous schoolmaster of Falisca at 5. 27. 8 and claims that 'ego Romanis artibus, virtute opere armis, sicut Veios vincam'. Note how the second passage is now absorbed into the speech of the older senators as an example of the very Roman arts which Camillus seeks to defend. For Fabricius spurning the doctor who offers to poison Pyrrhus, see Liv. *per.* 13; for the Faliscan schoolmaster and the doctor coupled as examples of deserters, see also Liv. 24. 45. 3; for the rejection of the schoolmaster and the doctor coupled as examples of 'iustitia' as a stratagem, see Frontin. *strat.* 4. 4. 1–2. Liv. 42. 47. 4–9 presents Roman policy in crisis precisely because it threatens to abandon the very qualities which his characters understand as defining them and which he sets out to propagate through his work. Does a downward momentum mark the remaining books? For brief but interesting remarks on this passage, see Chaplin (2000) 106–7.

therefore emerges as crucial is the way in which, taken together, they represent a developing engagement with the ethics of warfare and, by extension, with the right or otherwise of the Roman state to claim privileged status as the defender of a particular moral position.

The description of the tactics adopted by Philip as *kakopragmosune* gives the first passage a strongly moralizing tone from the beginning.[67] This is only enforced by the recurrence of the same term in the final sentence and the suggestion that the vices attributed to Philip are ever more common in the world of the historian.[68] The Romans, by contrast, represent the last vestiges of an older tradition and the proof of this is their open declaration of war, their avoidance of ambush, and their preference for hand-to-hand combat.[69] They are thus ethically superior not only in how they embark on a war, but also in how they fight it once engaged. When Polybius and Livy go on to evoke the troubled perspective of the older Roman senators confronted with Q. Marcius Philippus and of the Greeks coming to terms with Roman operations in Carthage, what matters is their conviction that the Rome they thought that they knew is now lost to them.

The impression given is of a consistent ethical attitude to the conduct of war. It is beguiling.[70] While Polybius may persist throughout in upholding the obligation openly to declare war, his perspective on military tactics is far less clear.[71] There are indeed passages of the

[67] Plb. 13. 3. 1. For κακοπραγμοσύνη and κακοπράγμων used pejoratively to describe various forms of deceit, see also Plb. 4. 27. 2–3, 13. 5. 1, 18. 40. 3, 22. 19. 1–4. The last example explicitly records Polybius' distaste for the smart operations of Archon and adds that there is a great difference between the man of action and the man of ill-action (πολὺ γὰρ δή τι μοι δοκεῖ κεχωρίσθαι κατὰ τὴν αἵρεσιν ὁ πραγματικὸς ἀνὴρ τοῦ κακοπράγμονος).

[68] Plb. 13. 3. 8.

[69] Plb. 13. 3. 7.

[70] For a survey of scholarly opinion on Polybius moralist or Machiavellian, see Eckstein (1995) 16–27.

[71] Cf. Eckstein (1995) 86–7. Plb. 13. 5. 1 accuses Philip of κακοπραγμοσύνη on Crete, and the 13. 4. 2 reference to his attempts to incite them to attack Rhodes would suggest that this refers primarily to the dishonourable modes of diplomacy to which he resorts. Plb. 14. 2. 13–14, by contrast, has Scipio Africanus make sure to suspend negotiations with Syphax before launching the night attack described at 14. 5. 15 as the most brilliant of Scipio's achievements.

Histories morally censorious of ambush.[72] Others, however, are enthusiastic in their celebration of generals who resort to just such tactics;[73] and some which have been cited as evidence of hostility to ambush actually express the opposite point of view.[74] Trickery is an essential part of the general's repertoire,[75] and the man most worthy of rebuke is the one who exposes himself to such hazards.[76] When Polybius follows up his 13. 3 account of *kakopragmosune* with a brief pen-portrait of Philip's cat's-paw Heracleides—made for evil, low-born, treacherous, and unchaste—it might seem that this gentleman has little to commend him.[77] Yet it must also be noted that one quality with which the historian does credit him—sharpness or *anchinoia*—is precisely that which more than any other is the hallmark of the great tactician in Polybius.[78]

The three passages quoted—for all their considerable consistency with each other—may now be seen to be far from representative of any unified strand in the thought of Polybius. Rather than seeking to extrapolate from them any universal account of military ethics, it is therefore essential to look in them for the factor which links or prompts them all. And that factor is plain to see: Rome. The sceptic faced with the rhetorical construction of the Roman arts at Livy 42. 47. 4–9 bristles at its self-serving humbug. Yet, humbug though it clearly is, it is far from clear that it is entirely ahistorical humbug.[79] For Livy may well be developing claims made in the debate on the Macedonian embassy, and the evidence of Plautus suggests that the association of *virtus vera* with the Roman art of war considerably antedates this time. Polybius,

[72] Plb. 8. 35. 1.

[73] See esp. Plb. 1. 64. 6 cf. 1. 57. 3, 1. 57. 5, 1. 58. 4, 1. 84. 7–8 on Hamilcar.

[74] When Plb. 4. 8. 11 claims that the Cretans are expert at all forms of military trickery but hopeless in conventional battle, while the Achaeans and Macedonians are quite the opposite, this reads like just one example of the Achaean historian's ceaseless assault on Crete as the home of civil war, bribery, and deceit of every sort (4. 53. 5, 6. 46. 2–3 and 9, 6. 47. 3–5, 8. 16. 4–7, 8. 19. 5, 8. 20. 2, 10. 46. 5 cf. 29. 15. 1, 24. 3, 28. 14. 1–4, 33. 16. 4–5). Yet the Cretans are introduced into the argument at this point precisely as a parallel for the admired Aratus of Sicyon whom Plb. 4. 8. 3–4 praises both for his mastery of politics and diplomacy and, in warfare, for his coups, tricks, plots (πράξεις, ἀπάτας, ἐπιβουλὰς) but whom 4. 8. 5–6 describes as slow-witted and inept as a general in open battle. Pritchett (1974) 178–9 and Van Effenterre (1948) 290 simplify the issue.

[75] Plb. 9. 12. 2.

[76] Plb. 3. 81. 9, 5. 75. 2–4, 8. 35. 2–36. 9.

[77] Plb. 13. 4. Note esp. 13. 4. 1 εὖ πεφυκὼς πρὸς τὸ κακόν.

[78] Plb. 13. 4. 5, cf. 8. 34. 10, 10. 33. 2, 11. 19b. 5, 18. 28. 6–9.

[79] Wheeler (1988) 24 objects that 'This hypocritical Roman condemnation of the Odysseus ethos requires no commentary.'

it has been noted, is the only Greek historian to concern himself with the problem of ambush.[80] That the ethics of warfare were a live issue at Rome precisely at the time when he and his fellow Achaean prisoners began their long detention in the city may go some way to explaining this phenomenon.

Hannibal and the Art of Ambush

The passages attested from Polybius and Livy describe events from the period *c*.205–150 BC. To the extent that Polybius writes in a Roman milieu and often reflects a very Roman perspective on events, it is probably right to detect in the claims which he and Livy reproduce considerable evidence for Roman self-fashioning in this period. Nor does it require very much reflection to identify the source for such insistence on the morality of Roman warfare: defeat, traumatic defeat.

The consolation for military reversal is the certainty that one would not have lost had the enemy fought a fair fight.[81] It is therefore little surprise that the one general who so consistently worsted his Roman opponents for any considerable length of time, who inflicted some of the most grievous of defeats on the Roman state, should also be marked as achieving victory by traps, snares, and deceits.[82] Hannibal is the master-trickster and Roman accounts of his triumphs insist repeatedly on this element in his generalship. The account of Cannae at Valerius Maximus 7. 4 Ext. 2 distils all that is characteristic of Livy's account of Roman trauma in the Second Punic War:

quid? Hannibal Cannensem populi Romani aciem nonne prius quam ad dimicandum descenderat compluribus *astutiae* copulatam *laqueis* ad tam miserabilem perduxit exitum? ante omnia enim providit ut et solem et pulverem, qui ibi vento multus excitari solet, adversum haberet. deinde partem copiarum suarum inter ipsum proelii tempus de industria fugere iussit; quam cum a reliquo exercitu abrupta legio Romana sequeretur, trucidandam eam ab iis quos in *insidiis* conlocaverat curavit. postremo quadringentos equites *subornavit* qui *simulata* transitione petierunt consulem; a quo iussi more transfugarum depositis armis in ultimam pugnae partem secedere, destrictis gladiis, quos inter tunicas et loricas abdiderant, poplites pugnantium Romanorum ceciderunt. *haec fuit Punica fortitudo, dolis et insidiis et fallacia instructa. quae*

[80] Pritchett (1974) 177–89.

[81] On this point, see also Burck (1943) 322–3.

[82] For the attribution of defeat to the snares of the enemy as a Livian 'Entlastungsmoment', see Bruckmann (1936) 61, 85, 104–5, 110, 124–5.

nunc certissima circumventae virtutis nostrae excusatio est, quoniam decepti magis quam victi sumus.

What of Hannibal? Did he not bring the army of the Roman people at Cannae to so miserable an end after entangling it in many nooses of cunning before he went into battle? To begin with, he made sure that they should have their faces to the sun and the dust, which is commonly raised there in large quantities by the wind. Then he ordered part of his forces to take flight deliberately while the battle was actually in progress; when they were separated from the rest of the army and a Roman legion pursued them, he saw to it that the legion was slaughtered by men whom he had placed in ambush. Lastly, he set up four hundred horsemen, who went to the Consul pretending to be deserters. The Consul ordered them as such to lay down their arms and retire to the furthest part of the battle, as deserters are wont to do. Drawing swords which they had secreted between their tunics and breastplates, they hamstrung the fighting Romans. Such was Punic bravery, equipped with tricks and treacheries and deceit. That is now the surest excuse for our hoodwinked valour, since we were deceived rather than vanquished.

What Valerius says of Cannae runs through the entire Roman tradition and accounts of Hannibal's campaigns pullulate with the vocabulary of deception: *astus*,[83] *callidus* and *calliditas*,[84] *dolus*,[85] *fallere, fallax* and *fallacia*,[86] *fraus*,[87] *frustratio* and *frustrari*,[88] *ludibrium*,[89] *ludificatio*,[90] *dissimulare, simulare* and *simulatio*.[91] Much the same vocabulary also features prominently in accounts of Hannibal's allies and subordinates.[92] When occasionally such tactics are applied by Rome against Hannibal, it is implied that his arts are being turned on him.[93]

The myth of Hannibal the trickster, the rehabilitation of his Roman victims as high-minded dupes, is not fashioned out of nothing. Nor is it just a response to the experience of defeat. Quite apart from any individual stratagems which he may have employed in the course of the campaign, Hannibal emerges as the master of one particular tactic: the

[83] Liv. 27. 20. 9, 35. 14. 12.
[84] Cic. *off.* 1. 108; Nep. *Hann.* 9. 2; Flor. 1. 22. 12, 1. 22. 16, 1. 22. 26.
[85] Liv. 22. 23. 4, 27. 16. 14, 27. 28. 4; Nep. *Hann.* 5. 3, 10. 4.
[86] Liv. 22. 16. 6; Frontin. *strat.* 3. 3. 6; Quint. *inst.* 2. 17. 19.
[87] Liv. 22. 17. 7, 22. 23. 4, 22. 28. 6, 22. 28. 8, 22. 43. 1, 22. 48. 1, 26. 6. 11, 27. 16. 14, 27. 28. 3, 27. 28. 6, 27. 28. 13, 27. 33. 9, 27. 33. 10; Flor. 1. 22. 13.
[88] Liv. 22. 16. 6, 22. 41. 9.
[89] Liv. 22. 16. 6.
[90] Liv. 22. 18. 9.
[91] Liv. 24. 20. 15, 25. 8. 12; Cic. *off.* 1. 108; Frontin. *strat.* 2. 5. 24, 3. 10. 4; Flor. 1. 22. 16.
[92] Liv. 22. 22. 15, 25. 15. 10, 26. 17. 5–16 cf. 27. 44. 9, 29. 33. 3.
[93] Liv. 27. 41. 6–7 cf. 34. 61. 4. Cic. *off.* 1. 108 cf. Plu. *Fab.* 23. 1–2 put Fabius Maximus alongside Hannibal while Plb. 18. 28. 6–9 claims that Scipio Africanus is his equal.

ambush.[94] Though both the Latin term *insidia*[95] and the Greek ἐνέδρα[96] acquire loose and indeed figurative senses, both also denote a specific military tactic in a way which is not so for the other terms for deception cited above. In the case of Hannibal, it consists of the cunning disposition of unseen troops to the side of the proposed place of battle. This is followed by a tactical retreat of the central body of the troops until it is possible to bring out the soldiers lying in ambush and attack the enemy from three sides at once.[97] Rome suffered all too often from this manœuvre until finally learning to resist; but not even final victory could take away the pain of the defeats which came before. The obsession of the literary sources with the ethics of ambush is a rationalization of that pain.[98]

Ambush and Generalship in Plautus

It was suggested earlier that intrigue in the *Poenulus* becomes an exercise in 'Playing Punic'. It is perhaps therefore no surprise that ambush plays a prominent role in the plot against the pimp. Both Agorastocles and Syncerastus proclaim their intention to ambush Lycus,[99] and the latter himself describes the trick with Collybiscus in the same terms.[100] The prominence and successful application of Hannibal's favourite tactic in this of all plays makes sense, though it should be recalled that

[94] Plb. 3. 81. 9, 3. 84. 1, 3. 105. 1, 3. 105. 4, 10. 32. 3; Liv. 21. 53. 11, 22. 4. 2, 22. 17. 6, 22. 28. 5, 22. 28. 6, 22. 28. 7, 22. 28. 14, 22. 41. 6, 22. 42. 5, 22. 42. 11, 22. 43. 6, 23. 1. 6, 23. 1. 7, 24. 14. 6, 27. 2. 12, 27. 16. 14, 27. 26. 2, 27. 26. 5, 27. 26. 7, 27. 27. 14; Cic. *off.* 1. 108; Nep. *Hann.* 4. 3, 5. 3, 6. 4, 12. 2; Frontin. *strat.* 2. 5 'de insidiis' features Hannibal in 7 out of 47 stratagems cited, some loosely connected with ambush in any technical sense: 2. 5. 13, 2. 5. 21–5, 2. 5. 27; App. *Hann.* 10, 20, 23, 35, 40, 42; Zonar. 8. 24, 8. 25, 8. 26, 9. 1, 9. 8, 9. 9; Plu. *Fab.* 11. 5, 19. 6, 19. 8.
[95] See *OLD*, p. 923, s.v. 'insidiae' 4.
[96] See *LSJ*, p. 477, s.v. ἐνέδρα 2. For a figured use of ἐνέδρα in comedy, see Antiph. *Knoith.* fr. 122. 7 K-A = Ath. 448E–449B. The alternative term λόχος and its cognates are generally used with a more limited and technical range of meanings, though Plb. 3. 40. 6 and 7. 9. 8 suggest a figurative sense. For the verb ἐνεδρεύω in Menander, see *Kolax* B 44 Arnott.
[97] See Lazenby (1978) 53, 55–6, 62–5, 72–3, 81–2, 114, 256.
[98] For the running theme of 'insidia' and 'fraus' in Livy's account of Hannibal's victories, see also Burck (1943) 321–3 and Christ (1968) 469–70. Blättler (1945) 62 notes a similar process of exculpation in the attribution of the capture of Regulus to the trickery and ambush of the Spartan Xanthippus at Cic. *off.* 3. 99; Val. Max. 1. 1. 14; Sil. 6. 299–345. Plb. 1. 32–4, by contrast, has Xanthippus move his forces to the plain the better to employ his elephants and cavalry, and has Regulus captured as a result of the ensuing encounter.
[99] Plaut. *Poen.* 549, 884.
[100] Plaut. *Poen.* 788.

it is applied by the comic hero and his associates and not the villain of the piece.

What though of the great slave-generals of Plautus? Frequently, these figures, when presenting themselves as leaders of a campaign, are capable of demonstrating concerns which no good Roman general could overlook. Toxilus, for instance, is duly preoccupied with the taking of the auspices before sending his troops into battle, *Persa* 606–8:

> TOX. age, age nunc tu, in proelium
> vide ut ingrediare auspicato. VIR. liquidumst auspicium, tace.
> curabo ut praedati pulchre ad castra convertamini.

TOX. At him now, at him! See you enter the fray under happy auspices!
VIR. The auspices are bright, hush! I'll look out that you return to camp well laden with loot.

The same slave-general will go on to deliver what Fraenkel brilliantly demonstrates to be a parody of the ritual prayer of thanks to Jupiter Optimus Maximus of the Roman *triumphator*.[101] Without positively calling himself Roman, it is hard to see what more Toxilus could do to invite identification with a specifically Roman general. Yet he too is a master of trickery, and sets an ambush to waylay Sagaristio the pimp.[102] For all that he identifies himself with a characteristically Roman figure, his tactics are those which the Roman devotees of *vera virtus* construct themselves as eschewing.

Much the same might be said of Palaestrio in the *Miles Gloriosus*. This slave commands his legions,[103] calls a meeting of the senate,[104] trains his maniples,[105] and gives out provinces as an *imperator* to his troops.[106] Yet he is also a master of the arts of *fallacia*,[107] *dolus*,[108] and *ludificatio*,[109] and the final product of all his scheming is an ambush into which the bumbling Pyrgopolynices can fall.[110]

[101] Plaut. *Persa* 753–7 cf. Fraenkel (1960) 226–32.
[102] Plaut. *Persa* 480–1: 'hunc hominem ego hodie in trasennam doctis deducam dolis, | itaque huic insidiae paratae sunt probe. adgrediar virum.' Brotherton (1926) 63 and Woytek (1982) ad loc. rightly observe that the principal metaphor here is hunting, not warfare.
[103] Plaut. *Mil.* 219–30, esp. 224.
[104] Plaut. *Mil.* 592–5.
[105] Plaut. *Mil.* 813–15.
[106] Plaut. *Mil.* 1156–62, esp. 1159–60.
[107] Plaut. *Mil.* 192, 875, 1156.
[108] Plaut. *Mil.* 147, 192, 198, 248, 357, 773, 783, 938, 1154, 1157.
[109] Plaut. *Mil.* 488, 490, 495, 538, 906, 927, 991, 1161.
[110] Plaut. *Mil.* 1388–9, esp. 1389: 'paratae insidiae sunt'. Brotherton (1926) 63 again points to the hunting metaphor here.

Likewise Epidicus. Here he calls a meeting of the senate in order to devise a plan of campaign, *Epidicus* 158–63:

> EPID. ite intro, ego de re argentaria
> iam senatum convocabo in corde consiliarium,
> quoi potissimum indicatur bellum unde argentum auferam.
> Epidice, vide quid agas, ita res subito haec obiectast tibi;
> non enim nunc tibi dormitandi neque cunctandi copia est:
> adeundumst. senem oppugnare certumst consilium mihi.

EPID. Yes, go in; as for myself, I will now summon the senate inside my chest to consider matters of finance and decide who is the best party to declare war against and get money from. Look sharp, now, Epidicus, with such a sudden duty devolving upon you. I tell you what, there's no chance now for you to nap or hesitate. Forward! I'll storm the old man—my resolve is fixed.

As Segal points out, the reference to summoning the senate is a gratuitously Roman touch: if the Greek original read βουλή, the Latin *consilium* would have offered a quite satisfactory translation but one of a markedly more neutral tone.[111]

At a later point, the same slave-general is busy convoying supplies to the colony under his own auspices,[112] and the young master is happy to proclaim that it is by the auspices of Epidicus that he returns to camp laden with booty.[113] Yet, needless to say, the characteristic weapons of Epidicus are *astutia*,[114] *dolus*,[115] *simulatio*,[116] and *ludificatio*,[117] and the slave-general whose summoning of the senate struck so Roman a pose also proclaims his intention to turn into a swallow and suck out the blood of the two old men renowned as pillars of that same institution.[118] Epidicus is a would-be Roman general with profoundly 'un-Roman' tactics, a senator and an enemy of the senate all in one. The instability is telling.

Hitherto, I have quoted examples where the Roman pose has time briefly to establish itself before it is subverted. In other cases, the process is more immediate. A classic example of the motif of the slave as general is furnished by the *Pseudolus*. In this play, enemies abound: an unseen Macedonian soldier and his doltish representative, a tricky

[111] Segal (1987) 129. For these lines as a joke against the declaration of war as a get-rich-quick scheme for the ruling class, see Gabba (1988) 75. Harris (1979) 102–3 cites the same lines as evidence of popular expectations of booty from war but Gabba's version is more acute.
[112] Plaut. *Epid.* 342–3. [113] Plaut. *Epid.* 381. [114] Plaut. *Epid.* 363, 375.
[115] Plaut. *Epid.* 372, 375. [116] Plaut. *Epid.* 373. [117] Plaut. *Epid.* 373.
[118] Plaut. *Epid.* 187–8: 'iam ego me convortam in hirudinem atque eorum exsugebo sanguinem, | senati qui columen cluent.'

pimp and an obstructive father. In order to outdo them and win the girl for his young master, the slave gives out orders, sets out to besiege a town, is cut off from pillaging, musters his troops, and finally celebrates a triumph. The most sustained expression of this theme comes, however, at *Pseudolus* 574–93. This is the exuberant *canticum* sung by the playwright's greatest wily slave as he emerges after a period of plotting within the house, followed by the two lines in which he notices the arrival of Harpax, slave to the Macedonian soldier Polymachaeroplagides:

pro Iuppiter, ut mihi, quidquid ago, lepide omnia prospereque eveniunt:
neque quod dubitem neque quod timeam, meo in pectore conditumst
consilium.
nam ea stultitiast, facinus magnum timido cordi credere; nam omnes res
perinde sunt
ut agas, ut eas magni facias; nam ego in meo pectore prius ita paravi copias,
duplicis triplicis dolos perfidias, ut ubiquomque hostibus congrediar
(maiorum meum fretus virtute dicam,
mea industria et malitia fraudulenta),
facile ut vincam, facile ut spoliem meos perduellis meis perfidiis.
nunc inimicum ego hunc communem meum atque vostrorum omnium,
Ballionem, exballistabo lepide: date operam modo;
atque huc meas legiones adducam; si expugno
(facilem hanc rem meis civibus faciam)
post ad oppidum hoc vetus continuo meum exercitum protinus obducam:
inde me et simul participes omnis meos praeda onerabo atque opplebo,
metum et fugam perduellibus meis me ut sciant natum.
eo sum genere gnatus: magna me facinora decet efficere,
quae post mihi clara et diu clueant.
sed hunc quem video? quis hic est qui oculis meis obviam ignobilis obicitur?
lubet scire quid hic veniat cum machaera et huic, quam rem agat, hinc dabo
insidias.

By Jupiter! How charmingly, how blissfully, all my undertakings do turn out for me! Nothing to doubt, nothing to fear, with the scheme now stored in my chest! Ah, the folly of entrusting a weighty venture to a weakling heart! Ah, all things are what you make them, have the weight you give them. Ah, and I, the way I have my troops already marshalled in my mind, in double, triple, line of wile and guile, let me meet the enemy where'er I may, I—animated, I may say, by the noble spirit of my sires and by the energy and artful dodges of my own self—shall easily master, easily despoil, my foemen with my flimflam. Now for this common enemy of all of us, mine and yours, this Ballio—I'll ballistify him in fine shape. Just you watch! Aye, I'll lead my legions hither; on taking him by

storm—an easy matter I'll make of it for my fellow-citizens—I'll then next lead my troops against this old town forthwith. With that, I'll load and lavish booty on myself and likewise on my comrades all, "that the world may know that I am born fear and flight for my foe". Such is the stock from which I spring—for me 'tis seemly to succeed in weighty ventures which will leave a lustrous name in far days to come. But who is this I see? Who is this unknown thus thrown athwart my line of vision? I'd like to find out what he and his sword are doing here; I'll ambuscade him from over here and see what he's up to.[119]

There is much in this passage to make one think of a great general: the drawing up of the troops in double and triple line; the prospect of siege action against the pimp; the plan to lead the legions against that other city represented by father Simo; fear and flight for the foe but booty for the men. When Pseudolus describes himself as animated by the noble spirit of his sires (*maiorum meum fretus virtute*),[120] and boasts that he is of such a clan that it is appropriate for him to perform great deeds to be famous for a long time to come (*eo sum genere gnatus: magna me facinora decet efficere, | quae post mihi clara et diu clueant*),[121] his rhetoric resounds with the spirit of emulation Polybius describes in a Roman aristocratic funeral,[122] with the pride of Turnus in falling short of none of his ancestors,[123] or the determination of Catiline at Pistoia to live up to the ancient *dignitas* of his line.[124] Such rhetoric is no exclusive Roman preserve but, if it recalls anything to the audience of Plautus, it must be the posturing of their aristocratic leadership.[125] Pseudolus transformed can furnish himself with a distinguished if unnamed lineage; a defining characteristic of the slave of comedy is his want of family, of any world beyond that of his master's house.[126]

[119] For arguments against the authenticity of vv. 576–80 and 587–9, see Zwierlein (1991) 138–44. It is certainly the case that more coherent Latin is achieved if the full-stop is removed after v. 575 'in pectore conditumst consilium' and v. 583 'facile ut vincam' is treated as the continuation of the same sentence. However, the three 'nam' clauses at vv. 576–7 and the redundant duplication of 'ut' at vv. 580 and 583 to which Zwierlein objects may in fact communicate the breathless excitement of the slave.

[120] Plaut. *Pseud.* 581. [121] Plaut. *Pseud.* 590–1. [122] Plb. 6. 52–5.

[123] Verg. *Aen.* 11. 441, 'haud ulli veterum virtute secundus'.

[124] Sall. *Catil.* 60. 7, 'memor generis atque pristinae suae dignitatis', cf. Sall. *Jug.* 85. 29, 'non possum fidei causa imagines neque triumphos aut consulatus maiorum meorum ostentare'.

[125] For such posturing, see esp. Harris (1979) 30 and n. 5 citing Scipionic elogia at *ILLRP* 311 and 316.

[126] For slaves boasting of their 'maiores', cf. Plaut. *Cas.* 418, *Mil.* 373, *Stich.* 303 with Petersmann (1973) ad loc. Note also the family tradition asserted at Plaut. *Epid.* 340. Dumont (1987) 415 and nn. 705–6 comments intelligently on Plaut. *Cas.* 418 and compares Plaut. *Cas.* 723–4 where the same Olympio sports patrician costume. For a parasite's pride in maintaining the profession of his 'maiores', see Plaut. *Persa* 53–61, 390.

Yet how will Pseudolus win out? Here are some of the weapons at his disposal as listed in the *canticum*: *dolos, perfidias, malitia fraudulenta*. And ambush. At the close of the *canticum*, intrigued to see what Harpax is up to, Pseudolus draws aside and quips *hinc dabo insidias*.[127] The same motif recurs frequently for one character spying on another in Plautus.[128] In the *Pseudolus*, however, it leads directly into the scene in which Harpax is tricked. As the play develops further, Pseudolus will wait in ambush while Simia goes into action against the pimp,[129] and finally the aged Simo—an unusually ludic father[130]—will turn the tables on Pseudolus and plan a further ambush against him in return.[131] Success, however, is incomplete. Reluctant though he is to pay up the money which he owes the slave, Simo has no choice but to admit that he has lost his bet and settle up.[132] Reduced to the state of a suppliant, he does eventually induce Pseudolus to return some of his winnings, but only on condition that he grant an amnesty to son and slave and join the latter on his drunken spree.[133] And buried amidst all this is a most suggestive formulation. At 1315–16, Simo laments the fact that Pseudolus takes his money and laughs at him in the process; the slave responds with an oddly resonant phrase: *vae victis*. It is as if the great slave-general Pseudolus briefly slips his mask and reveals himself to be no Roman, no consul, but rather that master of Roman humiliation in arms: Brennus the Gaul.[134] The implications of such an identification are instructive and merit further consideration.

A Fragile Construction

The bulk of this chapter has concerned Roman constructions of their own national character and of that of the Carthaginians on the basis of military tactics. The analysis of this discourse further suggested that the identification of the wily slave of comedy with the figure of the contemporary Roman general was inherently unstable because, for all the Roman airs adopted by the slave, his tactics belonged to the category identified as un-Roman and Carthaginian.

[127] Plaut. *Pseud.* 594.
[128] Plaut. *Asin.* 881, *Cas.* 436, *Mil.* 303.
[129] Plaut. *Pseud.* 959 cf. 1047–8, where Simia puts an end to questioning in 'insidiis hostilibus' and urges a quick march to safety.
[130] Plaut. *Pseud.* 546, 'indice ludos nunciam, quando lubet', marks Simo's surrender to the spirit of play and there is little thereafter to justify the harsh characterization of his role offered, for instance, by Anderson (1993) 131 and 148.
[131] Plaut. *Pseud.* 1239, 1241, 1245.
[132] Plaut. *Pseud.* 1312–18.
[133] Plaut. *Pseud.* 1327–30.
[134] Cf. Liv. 5. 48. 9; Fest. p. 510 L.

Such dichotomies are, of course, rather too neat. It has indeed been suggested that the Roman armies of the Second Punic War were fundamentally naïve in their strategies until finally educated by Hannibal, but it is hard to accept that the situation is so clear-cut.[135] Notably, two of the three passages quoted from Livy and Polybius for the construction of Roman tactics stem from episodes where what is at issue is Rome's failure to live up to such standards. However, the admission, that contemporary Roman generals did indeed employ ambush and other cunning tactics at times, cannot in itself eradicate the impression that a succession of traumatic defeats at the start of the Second Punic War gave room for the construction of the Carthaginians as the masters of this art and of the Romans as its victims. The construction need not respond to every available piece of evidence which can be attested now in order to have carried conviction then.[136]

More substantive is the objection that this is only one construction amongst many or, to put it another way, just a subset of one big construction opposing Romans and foreigners in general. This, after all, is the implication of suggesting that Pseudolus identifies himself with Brennus and, by extension, Simo with his defeated Roman foe. Instead of citing the *Pro Scauro* for evidence of hostility to Carthaginians, one could point to the *Pro Fonteio* for the sempiternal Gallic hatred of Rome.[137] Nor were tribes such as the Boii exactly amateurs at the art of ambush.[138]

Intriguing though such allusions may be, it may further be asked why so much attention is being paid to Carthage and Gaul, when the big issue is really Greece. It will be noted that the older senators in Livy characterize military cunning as the preserve not just of Carthage but also of Greece. Diodorus and Polybius have obvious subjective reasons to make them speak only of the former, but Polybius, as has been seen,

[135] Brizzi (1982) 8, 78–110, 270, exaggerates the case and is rightly criticized at Wheeler (1988) 51–2. Plb. 1. 57. 3–5 and 58. 4 suggests that Roman commanders already knew how to lay an ambush at the time of the First Punic War while 3. 18. 9–19. 4 has L. Aemilius Paullus on Pharos employ what Polybius calls a stratagem and which is blatantly an ambush.
[136] For Roman employment of ambush, see esp. Liv. 27. 41. 6–7, 27. 46. 6, 28. 33. 4, 30. 4. 1–3.
[137] Cic. *Font.* 30–1, 33.
[138] Liv. 23. 24. 6–13, 35. 4. 4.

is happy elsewhere at one point to associate trickery in war with Macedon and at another with Crete.[139] Ambush and deceit may feature less prominently in Livy 31–45 than in his account of the Carthaginian Wars but examples are there to be found.[140] As for Plautus, meanwhile, the emphatically and self-consciously Greek world represented is one where a Greek character can use *fides Graeca* as a synonym for trickery.[141] For all that we may detect a glimpse of Brennus at the close of the *Pseudolus*, it is to the great Greek trickster Ulysses that Simo will liken his slave and the Chrysalus of the *Bacchises* embraces the same associations.[142] When Segal maps the tricksterism of the slave onto Roman ideas of national character, he therefore evokes the Sinon of *Aeneid* 2 and the *Graeculus* of Juvenal 3. Such characters, he claims, are typical of Roman views of the Greeks in particular and of foreigners in general.[143] The Carthaginian features in this argument only as an example of how the same prejudice can cover any other race as well: anyone non-Roman is effectively Greek.[144]

It is not my intention to deny that Greece is the principal obsession of Plautine comedy. This is, moreover, a Greece displaced to the Roman stage and all the more constructed, all the more hyperbolically Greek for that. It is therefore a Greece which invites constant reflection on what it is to be a Roman, just as, in the world outside the theatre, the ever-increasing influence of Greek culture on Rome makes the task of defining true, undefiled Romanity all the more urgent. This is the source of the paradox whereby objectively Greek agelasts and blocking characters can come to represent effectively Roman figures in the *palliata*. Stage-setting, name, and costume declare these characters to be Greek, but they are created and enjoyed in a world where strict Catonian morality defines Roman culture in austerely agrarian and military terms, while licence and luxury are the product of an invasion of Greek manners.[145] In the terms of this discourse, therefore, the grumbling rustic is subjectively a Roman and the urban sophisticate a Greek.[146]

[139] Plb. 13. 3. 1–8; 4. 8. 11. See pp. 39–40, 44 n. 74 above.

[140] Liv. 31. 24. 8, 31. 26. 2–4, 31. 36. 1–3, 31. 38. 10, 32. 33. 10–11 and 16, 32. 40. 1, 33. 6. 12, 33. 7. 4, 33. 25. 5, 33. 29. 3–4, 35. 29. 3–7 and 9, 35. 35. 1, 35. 36. 5, 36. 12. 7, 36. 14. 12–14, 37. 10. 9–12, 37. 12. 8, 37. 26. 4, 38. 14. 3, 38. 14. 11–14, 38. 25. 7–8, 38. 40. 8, 39. 25. 10, 39. 26. 3–4, 40. 8. 2–14. 3, 40. 23. 4–7, 40. 24. 5, 40. 55. 1–3, 41. 20. 3–4, 42. 11. 8, 42. 15. 4 and 9, 42. 48. 2, 43. 23. 4–5, 44. 24. 8, 44. 27. 3, 44. 44. 4–6, 45. 11. 1.

[141] Plaut. *Asin.* 199. Segal (1987) 38 cites this line but misrepresents Lejay (1925) 237 when he claims that the latter identifies more than 75 words for 'Greek trickery'. What Lejay actually does is to identify 75 words for trickery in Plautine Latin. *Asin.* 199 is the only reference to 'fides Graeca' in Plautus.

[142] Plaut. *Pseud.* 1063–4, *Bacch.* 946, 949–52.

[143] Segal (1987) 37–9.

[144] Segal (1987) 38.

Yet this is not a recantation. Crucial though Greece is, it cannot speak for everything. Though Segal is one of the few Plautine scholars even to hint at the importance of Hannibal the trickster, he offers little sense of the specific historical moment and, by building a picture of racial stereotypes out of passages from Vergil and Juvenal, risks writing the history of Roman *mentalités* as a rather bland continuum. And yet how rich is that historical moment and how massive an impact on the Roman imagination must derive from the fifteen years for which the Carthaginian force remained in the Italian mainland, from the succession of defeats inflicted in the initial stages of that occupation!

To the observations previously offered on the slave as general and the problem of tactics, two more general observations may be offered. First, it is not just that the wily slave acts in a manner potentially reminiscent of Hannibal. Rather, that part of the Hannibal tradition which emphasizes his gift for deceit and dissimulation has a peculiarly theatrical, indeed New Comic element to it: tricks with signet rings, wigs, changes of costume and tongue, acting as if he were someone else and not Hannibal. In short, if the wily slave recalls the Hannibal of history, the Hannibal of history recalls the wily slave. Second, the persistent pattern whereby the wily slave wins out against the authority figure—most obviously the father—is telling. For, it is in just such authority figures that the effectively Roman figures of the *palliata* are found and the only figure who can stand for the repeated worsting of Roman authority in this period is Hannibal. Nobody in the Greek world of the period comes close to the dazzling efficacy and menace which he represents.[147]

I have always been suspicious of arguments which made any appeal to notions of the collective subconscious and regarded such procedures as a specious cover for assertions which no evidence could be produced to sustain. In this instance, however, it is hard not to see in the Plautine celebration of the slave as trickster a compulsive reperformance

[145] I summarize the position of Segal (1987), esp. 10–12, 15–41. There is much to commend this as a description of the basic dynamics of Plautine comedy. Yet Cato is only one voice in a complex historical process and, as I hope to show in Chs. 4 and 5, a far from simple one at that.

[146] See pp. 101–5. Segal (1987) 97 is useful for the Roman role played by the agelast.

[147] Liv. 31. 1. 6–7 effectively confesses as much.

of traumatic shared disaster. The audience engages with the wiles of a Pseudolus and celebrates the toppling of another Simo, but is that laughter always comfortable? Can the fear of slaves in arms or the pain of the Hannibalic disaster ever entirely be repressed?

3

The *Captivi* and the Paradoxes of *Postliminium*

Introduction

The wily slave of Plautine comedy is a character without a past. When Pseudolus suggests that it is proper for him to perform heroic deeds because this is the tradition of his ancestors, his playful embrace of the rhetoric of the Roman aristocracy exposes a fundamental aspect of his figure.[1] Who, it may be asked, are those ancestors? Where does the slave come from? No answer to such speculation will ever be supplied. The classic slave heroes of Plautine comedy—Pseudolus, Chrysalus, Tranio, Epidicus, Milphio, Palaestrio, Toxilus—are not even identifiable, like many of their peers in Menander and Terence, with a specific ethnic grouping. They have no memory of their parents;[2] they suffer no nostalgia; they tell us nothing of how they came to be enslaved.[3] A form which is regularly preoccupied with unravelling the vicissitudes which can lead free women through kidnap and sale to the verge of prostitution, has no concern to create such narratives for the male.[4]

One play in the Plautine corpus stands out as an exception to the rule identified above and that is the *Captivi*. Nor does this play do so casually and in passing. Rather, it begins by presenting two characters self-consciously engaged in the performance of the tricks of the slave hero precisely in order to secure the return to his former status of one of

[1] Plaut. *Pseud.* 581, 590–1. For this motif, see pp. 49–51.

[2] An exception to the rule asserted is Sosia at Plaut. *Amph.* 365: 'Sosiam vocant Thebani, Davo prognatum patre.' Christenson (2000) ad loc. notes the solemn tone of 'prognatum' and describes this as 'pure bombast in a slave's mouth'.

[3] Cf. Spranger (1984) 72. Finley (1980) 75–7 points to the sale and break-up of servile 'familiae' as the prime mechanism in the Roman world for the deracination of the slave and the denial to him of 'the most elementary of social bonds, kinship'. For the master as substitute fatherland to the slave, see Soph. *Aj.* 518; Antiph. fr. 263 K-A = Stob. 4. 19. 9; Men. fr. 789 K-A = Stob. 4. 19. 34. Note also Plaut. *Bacch.* 170, *Stich.* 650 where the slave returning after a voyage addresses 'erilis patria'. For the slave's loss of father and fatherland exploited to pathetic effect, see Plaut. *Persa* 635–47.

[4] Cf. Moore (1998) 186. I have found much to admire in Moore's discussion of the *Captivi*.

Comedy and the Rise of Rome

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