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1913

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Ola Louise Bogan
State University of Iowa



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Successive Appearances of Actors in Plautus

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the State University of Iowa in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

by

Bogan, Mrs. Ola Louise (Chew) B.A.

With Foster

Iowa City, Iowa

July, 1913,

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Successive Appearances of Actors in Plautus

The problem of the real division-points in the plays of Plautus has been treated by Dr. F.M.Foster in a paper, "The Divisions in the Plays of Plautus," and definite results have been obtained. This article was published in the "State University of Iowa Studies in Language and Literature," Vol.1, No.3, in May, 1913. In the course of his investigation, Dr. Foster noted that the same character often appears in two successive scenes, and in connection with these appearances, the following principle was formulated:¹

"When we have two successive appearances of the same character which are separated by a monologue spoken by a character who remains on the stage, no real division-point exists either immediately before or after the monologue, unless departure is expressly announced."

Dr. Foster has cited some fifteen instances as a basis of this principle, most of which support it; but as many other instances may be found in the plays, his treatment is incomplete.

These successive appearances are of two types. In the first type, these appearances are separated by a monologue, but there are a few examples of another type where no real monologue occurs.

It is the purpose of this paper to present the results of a study of all the instances of successive appearances to be found

1. Foster, "The Divisions in the Plays of Plautus," p.12

in the plays, with a view to determining whether Dr. Foster's principle quoted above, states all the facts of the case. Inasmuch as the question of real division-points is involved, the criteria² for determining such points should be kept in mind:

1. Express statements by the actors that they are about to leave the stage.
2. Vacant stage.
3. No clue given as to the identity of the oncoming actor.

It should likewise be remembered that these criteria are at all times subordinate to the demands of the development of the plot.

As stated above, the instances of successive appearances of the same character are of two types, depending upon the presence or absence of a monologue spoken between the successive appearances of a character. The instances where the successive appearances are separated by a monologue will be first discussed.

In the majority of cases, one character, unaccompanied, appears in successive scenes.³ In a few cases, two characters go out and return together.⁴ The character or characters may go

2. Foster, op.cit. p.5

3. Amph.1008; Aul.66, 444, 623, 660; Bacch.525, 912, 924, 1052; Capt.460; Cas.530, 548, 758a; Men.875; Merc.543, 691, 788; Persa 52; Pseud.573a, 1245. Text used was Lindsay, *Plauti Comoediae*, Oxford Press.

4. Asin. 809; Cas. 422-23; Stich. 672.

out alone and return accompanied by one or more others,⁵ or two characters may go out together and but one return.⁶ In two instances,⁷ a character goes out with one person and returns accompanied by another. In one instance,⁸ three characters go out and return together. These variations, however, have no effect upon our problem. Every instance of the successive appearance of one or more characters is a part of our field of investigation, and the sole requirement is that the same character or characters appear in successive scenes.

Having found, then, the instances of successive appearance, the next matter to be studied is the behavior of the person speaking the monologue. This will be found to vary greatly in different cases. Sometimes⁹ this character appears in neither the scene preceding nor the one following the monologue, but enters, speaks his lines and departs. Whether there is a real division-point in such a case must be determined by criteria other than the principle stated above, and the question does not lie within the province of this discussion.

In some instances,¹⁰ the character speaking the monologue is upon the stage in the scene preceding the monologue, but leaves

5. Bacch. 384, 794; Capt. 515; Cist. 630; Mil. 344, 1387.

6. Bacch. 169, 572; Curc. 215; Persa 250; Pseud. 1016; Truc. 698.

7. Cas. 503; Curc. 370.

8. Curc. 461.

9. Capt. 460; Curc. 461; Stich. 672.

10. Cas. 503, 548; Men. 875; Merc. 788; Mil. 1387.

as soon as he completes it. These cases, likewise, do not concern us since we are to take into account only those in which the character speaking the monologue remains upon the stage. In some cases,¹¹ the character is upon the stage both preceding and following the monologue; in others,¹² only following it. In two cases,¹³ his presence is not known to the other persons upon the stage, but the audience is aware of it. This does not interfere with the working of the rule.

In these instances where the person speaking the monologue remains upon the stage, if the principle as stated is valid, there is no division-point "either before or after the monologue, unless departure is expressly announced." This must, of course, indicate a departure which clears the stage of all characters, for unless there is a vacant stage,¹⁴ there can be no division-point. When the person speaking the monologue is upon the stage in the scenes both preceding and following, his continued presence prevents a division-point. We may, therefore, confine our attention wholly to those instances where the person speaking the monologue is upon the stage during the scene following the monologue, but not preceding it.¹⁵

11. Aul. 66, 444, 623, 660; Bacch. 794, 912, 1052; Cas. 422-23; Merc. 677; Mil. 344; Pseud. 1016.
12. Amph. 1008; Bacch. 169, 384, 525, 572, 924; Capt. 515; Cas. 530, 758a; Curc. 215, 370; Merc. 543, 691; Persa. 52, 250; Pseud. 1245; Truc. 698.
13. Aul. 660; Cas. 422-23.
14. Foster, op.cit.p.6.
15. Note 12.

Let us first examine the instances where departure is expressly announced. From the statement of the principle we may infer that when departure is expressly announced there is a real division-point preceding the monologue. Dr. Foster's criteria as stated on page 2 will be the basis of decision, it being always remembered that they are to be kept subordinate to the demands of the development of the plot. If, then, we find a vacant stage, with no hint given of the identity of the person about to enter, and no announcement of return made by the person leaving, we shall be justified in believing that the definite announcement of departure is followed by a real division-point. In Bacch. 525, 572; Cas. 758a; Curc. 215, 370; Persa 250; Pseud. 1245; and Truc. 698 we find all these conditions fulfilled and division-points, therefore, occur in these places.

In Cas. 530, both Lysidamus and Alcesimus go out, leaving the stage empty and giving no hint of their return. Neither is any remark made which gives a clue as to the identity of the person about to enter. But the development of the plot forbids that this be regarded as a real division-point. 1.514 is undoubtedly followed by a division-point and the intervening scene is too short to be regarded as a complete act. The content of Cleustrata's remarks when she enters, 1.531, is also too closely connected with the preceding scene to permit any break here.

In Merc.543, the three criteria demand a division-point, but since from the standpoint of the development of the plot it is uncalled for, and as a division-point undoubtedly occurs at 1.587, it is better to consider that there is no break at this point.

Conditions in Merc. 691 are similar to those in the preceding instance. Since there is clearly a division-point at 1. 666, should we also mark 1. 691 as a division-point, the shortness of the resulting act and its close relation to the following lines make it extremely probable that this is no real division-point.

It will be necessary to discuss in more detail, the instances where there is no definite announcement of departure.

In Amph. 1008. Mercurius, before he himself goes into the house, announces (1. 1005) the coming of Amphitruo, and also (1. 1008) his own reappearance. Amphitruo enters, speaks his monologue, and remains on the stage. There is no division-point.

At first sight, Bacch. 169, seems to have the characteristics of a real division-point, since the words of Pistoclerus, "sequere hac me, ac tace," imply that both characters go out, leaving the stage vacant. There has been no

16. Foster, op.cit.p.16

17. Foster, op.cit.p.16

hint concerning the identity of the character about to enter, nor an announcement of reappearance. But Dr. Foster has shown¹⁸ from 11. 180-181 that Pistoclerus saw Chrysalus coming and therefore remained on the stage. There can, then, be no division-point.

In Bacch. 384, Lydus, having spoken a monologue, goes out, leaving the stage empty. In his closing words, however, he states his intention of bringing Philoxenus to the house of the Bacchides. Since to do this, he must come back on the stage, this is equivalent to an announcement of return and no division-point can occur.

Dr. Foster has considered¹⁹ the difficulties in the way of regarding Bacch. 924 as a genuine division-point, but nevertheless has set it down as one. As he has said, there is no announcement of departure for Nicobulus. At the end of his monologue, (l. 978), Chrysalus says,

"sed Priamum astantem eccum ante portam video."

But when a character comes out of the house, the usual announcement is something like,

"eccum fores crepuerunt."

Dr. Foster has taken Nicobulus' first words after Chrysalus' monologue,

"Quoianam vox prope me sonat?"

to show that he has just heard the voice of Chrysalus and, therefore, could not have been on the stage in the preceding scene.

18. Foster, op.cit.p.11

19. Foster, op.cit.p.12

However, it seems probable that he speaks thus to mislead Chrysalus and imply that he has not overheard him.

As evidence of Nicobulus' presence, let us notice Bacch.404. Here we know that Mnesilochus is upon the stage during the conversation of Lydus and Philoxenus, but remains hidden from them until l. 451, when Lydus says,

"sed quis hic est quem astantem video ante ostium?"

a speech almost identical with l. 978 quoted above. In the lines following Mnesilochus does not disclose the fact that he has heard the previous conversation, but instead, asks questions intended to indicate to Lydus his entire ignorance of what has gone before.

In Merc. 700, we find a similar circumstance. Dorippa enters and begins speaking without seeing Lysimachus who, however, hears all that she says and makes remarks audible to the audience. But when, in l. 714, he makes his presence known to his wife, he does not betray the fact that he has overheard what she has just said.

These facts seem to show that Nicobulus did not leave, and in view of the fact that there is no definite announcement of his departure, we may assume that he remained on the stage. If he does remain there can be no division-point at l. 924.

In Capt. 515, Hegio, returning to his home, steps upon the stage speaking. Aristophontes, who is following him,

does not appear. At the conclusion of his monologue having directed Aristophontes to follow him upon the stage, Hegio, steps back, apparently to wait for Aristophontes just as Tyndarus who has seen them coming, rushes out of the house. Even if Hegio's direction to Aristophontes to follow him upon the stage, did not amount to an announcement of return, the close connection of the two scenes would prevent this being a division-point.

In Persa 52, Toxilus goes out leaving the stage vacant and giving no hint of the identity of the character about to enter. His final words,

"usque ero domi dum excoxero lenoni malam rem aliquam,"

implying that he will return when he has made such a plan, constitute an announcement of reappearance. This is verified by his opening words on his return (l. 81) in which he begins to describe his scheme. There is, then no real division-point at the end of Toxilus' monologue.

We have now considered and classified all instances of successive appearances separated by a monologue.

There are three instances²⁰ of successive appearances of one or more characters not separated by a monologue. The principle does not apply here. It may be noted, however, that as Dr. Foster has stated,²¹ Cist. 630 and Pseud. 573a are division-points, but at

20. Asin. 809; Cist. 630; Pseud. 573a.

21. Foster, op.cit. p.14, 18, 10

Asin. 809 there is no division-point, since here it would not fulfill the demands of the plot development. This completes the discussion of the successive appearances.

A summary of the instances where departure is definitely announced shows that Bacch. 525, 572; Cas. 758a; Curc. 215, 370; Persa 250; Pseud. 1245; and Truc. 698 support the principle in that the definite announcement of departure is followed by a division-point. But Cas. 530; Merc. 543 and 691 present a state of affairs diametrically opposed to this. There is a definite announcement of departure but the development of the plot forbids a division-point.

Turning to the instances where there is no definite announcement of departure, we find that the six instances (Amph. 1008; Bacch. 169, 384, 924; Capt. 515; and Persa 52) support the principle.

In studying the instances where the person speaking the monologue remained on the stage, it occurred to me that possibly a similar principle might be formulated in connection with those instances where the person speaking the monologue was upon the stage in the scene preceding the monologue but not following it.²² A study of these instances was made, with the following results:

In Cas. 503, Olympio and Lysidamus leave the stage without an announcement of return. Chalinus remains on the stage

and speaks ll. 504-515 and then he, too, leaves. He gives no hint of the identity of the character about to enter and makes no announcement of return. His monologue is followed by a division-point, l. 514.

Cleustrata's words in Cas. 548, intimate that she is about to leave the stage and the words of Alcesimus show that he believes she has done so. But after the departure of Alcesimus (l. 557), when Cleustrata again speaks (l. 558), her first words show that she has heard what he has said. She must, then, have stepped to one side but still have remained upon the stage, and so there can be no division-point.

In Men. 875, Senex goes out, leaving Menaechmus II alone upon the stage, but his closing words imply that he will return. There is, therefore, no division-point at l. 881, following the monologue and departure of Menaechmus II.

In the command of Dorippa to which Syra promises obedience in Merc. 788, there is an intimation of the reappearance of Syra. Consequently no division-point follows the monologue and departure of Lysimachus, l. 802.

In Mil. 1387, Pyrgopolynices goes with no intimation of return. The puer speaks his monologue and leaves the stage l. 1893, where, according to all the criteria, we have a division-point.

The conclusion to be drawn from these instances may be stated as follows:

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When the character speaking the monologue is upon the stage preceding the monologue, but not following it, and is the only person upon the stage during the monologue, if there has been no intimation of the reappearance of the character who has just left, the monologue is followed by a division-point.

The conclusions concerning the division-points are, with one exception, the same as those reached by Dr. Foster. This exception is Bacch. 924, which he claims as a division-point. But the facts of the case as stated on pages 7 - 8 do not seem to warrant such a conclusion.

The results of this investigation are:

1. Dr. Foster's principle as stated on page 1 of this paper and page 12 of his article is correct if applied only within the narrow field definitely designed by its terminology.

2. The implication of this principle, that when we have two successive appearances of the same character, separated by a monologue spoken by a character who remains on the stage, there is a division-point if departure is expressly announced, is supported by eight instances but contradicted by three. This would seem to weaken the force of the principle.

3. Another principle which is stated on page 12 was discovered with regard to the existence of a division-point following the monologue of a character who was upon the stage during the scene preceding his monologue but not following it.