

particolare delle "grandi" consultazioni, risultando di sovente la loro pubblicazione in manipolazioni tecniche (ma non necessariamente contenutistiche), o per gusti letterari e stilistici degli autori o ancora per la funzione e l'importanza degli oracoli ambigui nelle discussioni apologetiche.

*Mika Kajava*

ALISON SHARROCK: *Reading Roman Comedy. Poetics and Playfulness in Plautus and Terence*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-76181-9 (hb). XI, 321 pp. GBP 55.

The role of Roman drama in the field of classical literary criticism has recently become more and more important. Especially the performativity of drama has been of interest to many scholars. In this study, Alison Sharrock (who has previously written most notably on the textual relationships between Greece and Rome and on Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*) focuses on the textuality of Plautus' and Terence's drama. The first of the book's five chapters is the partially introductory "Art and artifice", in which S. looks at artificiality, "the essence of comic art", in Plautus and Terence. Some attention is given to the problematic nature of the textuality of the comic poets but, as the study is especially concerned with reading, a more detailed treatment of the matter would have been in order. S. also admits that the relationship between the Roman comic poets and the preceding Greek comic poets is genuinely problematic, but states that her study is not overly concerned with the topic. In the second chapter ("Beginnings"), S. studies the different devices of beginnings and their role in the making of the play. Of particular interest is the analysis of the intertexts of Terentian beginnings. In "Plotting and playwrights", S. analyzes the plots of comedy and is exceedingly astute when she focuses on the role of trickery in the internal plots and trickery-related vocabulary. This chapter also includes a creditable scrutiny of the role manipulation and fragility of identity. An equally strong look at the relationship between the slave-*architectus*' connection with the playwright's voice in Plautus is provided. In the fourth chapter ("Repeat performance"), S. concentrates on various types and devices of repetition in creating comedy – verbal, structural, metaphorical, intertextual and thematic. In this chapter, a stronger emphasis on textuality would perhaps have been of use. The readings of the parodical intertextual allusions in *Rudens* and *Hecyra* are praiseworthy. Also interesting are the comments on allusions to Sappho in Terence. The final chapter is about comical endings and it especially complements the second chapter. S. studies closural signals such as the solution to a problem that is set early in the play and the conventional *plaudite* – the play-ending call for applause by an actor. The book is particularly recommended for scholars and students interested in the literary theoretical study of Roman comedy and it is best accompanied by a study on the performativity of Plautus' and Terence's comedies (e. g., C. W. Marshall, *Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy*, Cambridge 2006).

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