

Publius Terentius Afer (195/185–159 BC), better known as Terence, was a playwright of the Roman Republic. His comedies were performed for the first time around 170–160 BC, and he died young probably in Greece or on his way back to Rome. Terentius Lucanus, a Roman senator, brought Terence to Rome as a slave, educated him and later on, impressed by his abilities, freed him. All of the six plays Terence wrote have survived.

One famous quotation by Terence reads: "*Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto*", or "I am a man, I consider nothing that is human alien to me."

Source: (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terence>)

Six comedies from Terence have survived, all are close adaptations or translations of Greek plays. (<http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0538/>)



Two from works by Apollodorus:

Hecyra (*Mother-in-Law*)

Latin: (<http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0538/IDX006.HTM>)

English: (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0116;layout=:loc=:query=toc>)

Phormio, a young husband with a wife whom he erroneously believes to be carrying someone else's child.

Latin: (<http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0538/IDX005.HTM>)

English: (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0117;layout=:loc=:query=toc>)



Four comedies adapted from Menander:

Andria (*The Girl from Andros*), recounts the travails of two young men, both in love and both thwarted by their respective fathers.

Latin: (<http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0538/IDX001.HTM>)

English: (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0113;layout=:loc=:query=toc>)

Heauton timorumenos (*The Self-Tormentor*), treats the problems of two young lovers.

Latin: (<http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0538/IDX003.HTM>)

English: (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0115;layout=:loc=:query=toc>)

Eunuchus (*The Eunuch*), describes the situation of Chaerea, who marries a girl he had earlier raped.

Latin: (<http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0538/IDX002.HTM>)

English: (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0114;layout=:loc=:query=toc>)

Adelphoe (*The Brothers*), compares two fathers—one too strict and one too lenient—and their two sons, in an exploration of the merits of different methods of childrearing.

Latin: (<http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0538/IDX004.HTM>)

English: (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0112;layout=:loc=:query=toc>)

Characteristics of Terrence's comedies:

- * perfect use of the Latin language
- * a sense of realism tempered by urbanity and restraint
- * sophisticated speech and a greater use of dialogue
- * use of irony
- * humane and objective approach
- * depicts a distinctly Roman society, with all its foibles and eccentricities
- * amoral, dissecting moral dilemmas
- * the double plot device

CRITICAL RECEPTION

While in his own time Terence's plays were not popular with audiences, many ancient critics—for example Cicero and Julius Caesar—praised his graceful and correct handling of the Latin language. Caesar tempered his complimentary remarks by calling Terence a "half-Menander" and accusing him of a lack of comic vision. That charge and the question of whether Terence was an original playwright have been the two main areas of critical discussion concerning Terence's comedies. The majority of scholars contend that Terence's sense of comedy was very much intact, but they admit that his plays sometimes strike audiences as somewhat monotonous or over-refined. Terence himself answered the charges of imitation in the prologues to his plays, including himself in the long, honorable tradition of younger writers paying tribute by copying their predecessors.

Most critics believe that, while he was not an inherently original author, Terence artfully transformed the situations and themes of Greek New Comedy into a genuinely Roman milieu. In the Middle Ages there was a resurgence of interest in Terence's plays, and their texts served as the basis for Latin language curricula in schools and monasteries. The influence of Terence's comedies has also been traced to works of the Renaissance and the eighteenth century. Today Terence commands admiration for his humanistic approach to his characters, for the new directions he made possible in drama through his introduction of double plots, and for the excellence of his Latin.

Source: (www.enotes.com/drama-criticism/terence)

The Eunuch – 232-264

Read in the restored pronunciation of classical Latin by Matthew Dillon, Loyola University.

<http://www.rhapsodes.fl.vt.edu/terence.htm>

