

Though adapted from Greek originals, the Roman *comœdia palliata* reflects contemporary Roman attitudes, language, and behavior; this point also holds true with religion in Plautus (Hanson, Jocelyn). Menander and Plautus represent sacrifice—the fundamental religious act of Greek and Roman society (Jameson, North, Prescendi)—as an integral part of daily life and even of casual conversation. Characters in Plautus regularly offer sacrifice (*Rudens* 1206), make plans to do so (*Trin.* 39), suggest that others perform a ritual (*Men.* 288–330, 517), and even joke about sacrificial rites (*Curc.* 71, *Ep. passim*).

In the entire Terentian corpus, however, no single sacrifice is conducted, mentioned, planned, or even merely remarked upon. This sacrificial silence, in light of the wealth of ritual material that permeates the plays of Menander and Plautus, is stunning, and has not previously been noted in Terentian scholarship. By deliberately suppressing sacrificial action and language, Terence breaks with both his Roman and his Greek predecessors. The audience, whether familiar with Menander, Greek tragedy, other Roman literature, or Plautus alone, would have noticed the lack of sacrifice on Terence's stage, and would perhaps have been disquieted by its absence. In this paper, I explore the effects of Terence's decision—his suppression of sacrifice—upon his theatrical world.

The suppression of sacrifice cheats expectations dictated by the genre of New Comedy. One could expect the *senex* Menedemus of *Heauton Timoroumenos* to offer a sacrifice in celebration of his reunification with his son but, strikingly, he does not. So also with weddings, births, and recognition scenes in Terence: there simply are no sacrifices or mentions thereof. The stage altar would still be present, but its very presence strongly marks the absence of sacrifice from Terence's drama. Although Terence is interested in domestic affairs, this fact alone does not explain his suppression of sacrifice, for the Lar Familiaris and the Penates were an important part of domestic life, and yet play virtually no role in Terence's drama (unlike in Plautus, who even assigns the prologue of *Aulularia* to the central family's Lar itself).

Since the rite of sacrifice is the basic religious activity for Greek and Roman society, it follows that communities are strengthened by and, to some degree, centered on sacrifice. Indeed, foundation sacrifices were essential to the formation of new communities, whether actual colonies or fictional utopiae (as in Aristophanes' *Birds*). Put simply, I will argue, a sacrificing community is a healthy community. The program of New Comedy is concentrated on creating such healthy communities. Establishing citizen marriages—for the “sowing” or “seeking out” of legitimate children—is a baseline concern of the genre. Examples abound in Menander, as I will demonstrate.

Not so in Terence. He was aware that, in New Comedy, as I will argue, a sacrificing community is a healthy, successful one—and so he underscores his gripping depictions of domestic strife by removing the physical ritual embodiment of spiritual stability (that is, sacrifice) from his comic household. As a former slave, Terence was alienated from the humor, perspectives, and interests of the privileged classes (Anderson 2000, 2001); his intentional suppression of sacrifice, the sign of a healed family and healthy community, demonstrates another aspect of this estrangement. Unlike his exemplar Menander, whose plays he adapts, Terence does not seek to establish citizen marriage or heal broken families (cf. Lape 2004a; on Menander, cf. Lape 2004b); unlike his Roman predecessor Plautus, he does not manipulate Greek models for theatrical humor, in order to play with clever slaves and witty courtesans. Instead, he explores realistically the dynamics of families torn apart by quarreling, by infidelity, and by rape, and he marks their dysfunction by withholding Menandrian, and even Plautine, sacrifice—the sign of a healthy community.