

MUNI  
ARTS

from  
Page  
**PLAUTUS**  
BRNO 2019 to Stage

# Titus Maccius Plautus

# Curculio or Darmojed

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12<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2019

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UNIVERSITY CINEMA SCALA, BRNO

The performance takes place in frame of the international conference  
**Titus Maccius Plautus: From Page to Stage.**

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[HTTP://CLASSICS.PHIL.MUNI.CZ/PLAUTUS](http://classics.phil.muni.cz/plautus)

## TRANSLATION

Tomáš Weissar, Eliška Poláčková, Daniela Urbanová, Radek Černocho

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

<b>Sophisticus</b> the Slave ( <i>Palinurus</i> ), owned by Romanticus	Pavel Ševčík
<b>Romanticus</b> the Youth ( <i>Phaedromus</i> ), foolishly in love with Erotium	Michal Musil
<b>Castoria</b> the Hag ( <i>Leaena</i> ), doorwoman in the brothel	Veronika Florianová (sings Tomáš Weissar)
<b>Erotium</b> the Girl ( <i>Planesium</i> ), owned by the Pimp, still virgin	Andrea Salayová
<b>Pornothecus</b> the Pimp, seriously ill	Emil Svoboda
<b>The Cook</b> , slave of Romanticus	Martin Šmerda
<b>Darmojed</b> the Parasite ( <i>Curculio</i> ), Romanticus's client	Karel Dobiáš
<b>Hypothecus</b> the Banker ( <i>Lyco</i> ), moneylender	Mirón Jurík
<b>Choregus</b> , production manager (tourist guide from Košice and worker from Brno)	Simona Aliová, Jakub Knobloch
<b>Gaius Omnibus Paco</b> the Soldier, or <b>Poclusemclus</b> ( <i>Therapontigonus</i> <i>Platagidorus</i> ), Romanticus' rival, in love with Erotium	Tomáš Antoš (sings Pavel Ševčík)

**Ms. Reference Underline**, personified  
footnote (added character)

Eliška Poláčková

**Slaves**

Jana Šenkyříková,  
Karolína Šťastná,  
Jakub Knobloch

**Directors:** Tomáš Weissar, Kristýna Hviždová

**Dramaturgy:** Eliška Poláčková

**Music:** Miloš Štědroň, Petr Skoumal, Stephen Sondheim

**Translation of the soldier's song:** Jan Werich

**Scenography:** Lucie Urbanová, Pavel Ševčík

**Costumes:** Lenka Bidmonová, Veronika Florianová



## **ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE**

The first Czech translation of the *Curculio* by Titus Maccius Plautus is an outcome of a translatorial workshop organized at the Department of Classical Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, by Daniela Urbanová, a specialist in the Archaic Latin from the said department, and Eliška Poláčková, theatre scholar from the Department of Theatre Studies of the same university. The results of the workshop, designed to instruct students in the intricacies of Plautine language on the example of the shortest of Plautus' plays, were used as a point of departure for the translation of the whole play done in collaboration of the above-mentioned specialists and Radek Černocho, student of Classics who had already graduated in the Roman Law, and Tomáš Weissar, graduate student of Latin and History. The translation was put to test in an actual theatre performance staged by members of the Titivillus, a student theatre group based at the Department of Classical Studies. Premiered in December 2017, the production saw more than fifteen runs since then, some presented at open air theatre festivals, other for grammar-school students and at other occasions.

## **ARGUMENTUM**

Darmojed was sent by Romanticus to Megalopolis to get money there one way or another so that he would be able to redeem his beloved from slavery. Having come across Romanticus' rival, Gaius Omnibus Paco, Darmojed cheats Gaius out of his signet ring which he later uses to seal a forged letter with stating that the girl in question, Erotium, should be sent from her current location at the pimp to the soldier to marry him. In fact, Darmojed brings Erotium to Romanticus instead, and the deceived soldier takes both the banker and the pimp to court. However, the girl appears to be Gaius' sister, which ultimately prevents their marriage so, in the end, he submits to Erotium's pleas and permits Romanticus to marry her in his place.

The story takes place in Epidaurus, Greece, in the street in front of the Temple of Asclepius. On its left, there is the house of the Pimp, on the right the house of Romanticus. In the first scene, Romanticus leaves the house to make a secret visit of his beloved Erotium, who – although staying at the Pimp’s brothel – still remains virgin by some miracle as we learn from the dialogue between Romanticus and his slave, Sophisticus.

### **ROMANITCUS AND SOPHISTICUS, V. 16–20**

- ROM. Right here, here is the door of my most beloved one! Well be with you, oh Door the Most Exquisite, how fare you?
- SOPH. Well be with you, oh Door the Most Fastened – I hope you didn’t catch cold the other day and you feel as fit as a fiddle. I pray thee, tell me now, what dainties did you have for dinner yesterday?
- ROM. Why do you make fun of me?
- SOPH. Then why, you fool, are asking the door how they are?

### **ROMANTICUS, SOPHISTICUS AND FOOTNOTE, V. 25–39**

- SOPH. Master, you don’t plan some mischief that would be in utter disagreement with your birth and position, do you? I hope you are not after some chaste girl – or at least a one who’s supposed to be chaste?
- ROM. I would never dare this! I swear to gods!
- SOPH. Good boy. Who is cunning as a fox, he knows very well that the most important thing about love adventures is not to get in trouble in the course of one – and always takes care of not being deprived of witnesses.
- ROM. What do you mean?
- SOPH. Just be smart and have pleasure only in the presence of witnesses.

- FOOT. (*interrupting*) Stop it! It does not make sense at all. I guess you didn't get that Plautine word pun, did you?
- SOPH. I must admit I found it a little bit weird...
- FOOT. Ah! Well, time for a short lesson of Latin, then: *testes* does, of course, mean "the witnesses", but also... (*pointing to her loins*)
- SOPH. Oh, I see!
- FOOT. And – having lost his good reputation, Roman citizen is also deprived of the advantage of having someone testify for him at the court: he becomes, in legal terms, *intestabilis*. The word, however, means also that someone is... well... I would say... physically indisposed.
- SOPH. It is a scrotesque – I mean, grotesque double entendre, indeed. I'll try again, may I?

Romanticus would like to pay Errotium off slavery, but he is desperately short of money. That's why he sent Darmojed, his client or parasite, to Megalopolis three days ago to find an old friend of Romanticus and ask him for a loan. Meanwhile, Romanticus tries to persuade the old doorservant of the pimp, Castoria, to allow him to see his beloved.

### **CASTORIA, ROMANTICUS AND SOPHISTICUS, V. 107–120**

- ROM. The old woman is a little bit thirsty.
- SOPH. How little a bit?
- ROM. She isn't that much demanding – she would do with... a keg.
- SOPH. Hmm, it rather looks like she could drink in one go a whole wine cellar! And how she can sniff the wine out! Better than any hound dog, I bet.
- CAS. Hallo! Is anyone there? (*shambles in the opposite direction*)
- ROM. I think I should approach her and talk to her. I will do it. Hey, Castoria, come back and look at me!
- CAS. Who commands me?

- ROM. It's me, your lovely Winey, your Lord Bacchus. Come here and drink, wet your whistle, open up your senses and quench the burning thirst...
- CAS. Where is it? Where is the wine?
- ROM. Come, follow the candle light.
- CAS. I beseech you, come closer!
- ROM. Fare well!
- CAS. How should I fare well when my throat is burning as hell?

The next morning, preceded by a short scene of the Cook interpreting a dream to the Pimp, Darmojed the Parasite arrives to Epidaurus from Megalopolis in the manner of a *servus currens*, the running slave, huffing and panting for breath. He doesn't bring the money but he has a plan in mind: In Megalopolis, he met by chance Romanticus' rival, Gaius Omnibus Paco, a soldier who had already bought the same girl Romanticus actually loves some time ago, but the business hasn't been transacted yet. Meanwhile, the money has been deposited at the Banker who was instructed to transfer them only to a person who would produce a letter signed by the soldier's seal.

### **ROMANTICUS, DARMOJED AND SOPHISTICUS, V. 305–329**

- ROM. I am so happy that you're back, safe and sound. Give me your hand. Now, where is my salvation? I implore you, by Hercules, speak!
- DAR. By Hercules, where is my salvation? (*starts to faint*)
- ROM. What's wrong with you?
- DAR. Darkness descends on me, my knees buckle... how terrible hungry I am!
- ROM. Oh gods, that must be an exhaustion from the long journey.
- DAR. Hold me, please...
- ROM. See how pale he turned? Push him a chair to sit on, quickly! Don't waste time! Bring him a jug of water, now!

- DAR. I think I will faint...
- SOPH. Do you want some water?
- DAR. Yes – if there are faggots and noodles in it.
- SOPH. Go to hell, will you?
- DAR. Oh, how much I longed to smell the nice aroma of home again!
- SOPH. No problem. (*Sophisticus and the other slaves fart to Darmo-jed's face*)
- DAR. Hey, what are you doing?
- SOPH. You wanted to smell the nice aroma of home, right?
- DAR. But this is no aroma of home at all!
- ROM. What do you want then?
- DAR. Why, I want to eat, of course! And smell the good old smells of the home kitchen.
- SOPH. Go kill yourself!
- DAR. That could easily happen. I have a soar stomach, dental palsy, congestive tongue disease and a severe chronic mouthitis. In short, I've suffered an acute lack of nourishment on my way, which have caused a complete emptiness of my belly.
- ROM. Don't worry, you'll get something to eat.
- DAR. Something! It is too vague consolation in my state. Can you be a little bit more specific?
- SOPH. If you knew what we have put aside for you...
- DAR. I want! I want to know it! And where! My tongue craves to talk with it in private, straightaway!
- ROM. Ham, offal, livers, pork jowl...
- DAR. All this, you say? (*disappointed*) Maybe locked somewhere, but definitely not for free and easily available.
- ROM. On the contrary – everything is on the plates. I ordered to get it ready when I learned you were coming.
- DAR. Don't joke with me about this.



ROM. It's true, just as Erotium loves me – as much as I love her. But still I don't know – how your business in Megalopolis went?

DAR. I bring nothing.

ROM. It is the end then!

DAR. Why, we are just in the middle of the play?

Since Darmojed managed to steal the soldier's signet ring, he could then easily persuade the banker – disguised as the soldier's freedman, proving himself by a forged letter – to pay the pimp the agreed sum of money and carry Erotium away, without any of them suspecting anything.

### **HYPOTHECUS AND DARMOJED, V. 438–448**

HYP. “I demand most respectfully that you hand over to the man who will bring this letter the girl which I bought some time ago in Epidaurus, at your presence as an intermediary, with all her jewellery and other stuff. You know the agreement: you should give the money to the banker and the girl to this man.” Where is your master? Why didn't he come in person?

DAR. The thing ith, I and my mathter came back from India the day before yetherday. Now, he wantth to have a huge thtatue of himthelf built at home, in Megalopolith, made of pure gold – a theven-meter-tall monument of hith great deedth.

HYP. What deeds?

DAR. Lithten: In mere twenty dayth, he alone conquered the Perthi-anth, Paphlagonianth, Carthage, the Arabth, Galathianth, cret-inth... I mean, Cretanth, Thyria, Rhode, even the Americanth...

FOOT. (*inhales as if she wanted to comment on it*)

DAR. (*cutting her off*) Yes, the Americans are not there, I know... (*goes on*) ...Altho Ungorgia and Ungulpia...

FOOT. Well, this is there, literally.

- DAR. ...Centauria, Flotilla, Amazonia and the Hangovory Coatht – that ith, by ethtimate roughly thome half of all the nationth of the world.
- HYP. Complete Alexander of Macedon.

At this moment, the development of the plot is halted by the monologue of the Choregus who comes to “entertain” the audience before the actors change costumes for the next scene. The monologue is a metatheatrical tour de Forum Romanum in which different groups of Roman citizens are referred to in mocking way, such as cheating husbands, mendacious bankers, etc.

In the next scene, the fake business is completed between the disguised Darmojed, Banker and Pimp, and Darmojed takes Errotium to the house of Romanticus. At this moment, however, the Soldier himself is coming to take Errotium, meeting first the banker and then the pimp who both insist that the girl has been already handed over to his freedman, whom Gaius identifies as Darmojed.

### **GAIUS OMNIBUS PACO AND PORNOTHECUS, V. 558–589**

- PORN. (*coming out of the temple*) It seems to me that the gods couldn't be angry with someone to whom they are apparently positively inclined. Having performed the sacrifice in the temple, it has occurred to me that I should be clever and collect the money from the banker right now before he sneaks away with them as far as the Pontus. I won't let him have a good time with my reward when I can have a good time with it, that's for sure.
- GAI. (*coming from the city*) Attention! At ease! Ahoy!
- PORN. Salve, Gaiusi Omnibusi Paco!
- FOOT. Oh gods! The right Czech vocative is Gaie Omnibe Pacone, right? O tempora, o mores...

- PORN. Ok... Salve, Gaie Omnibe Pacone! Well – I must say I liked the previous one more. You've arrived to Epidaurus safe and sound, as I can see. I will thus greet you tonight... with nothing more than a drop of the salt water.
- GAI. Thank you for your kind offer, Pornotheucus. I will come happily... and give you a nice beating. Anyway, how does my stuff fare at your place?
- PORN. It doesn't fare at all. I don't owe you anything anymore. And I have people to witness it.
- GAI. What?
- PORN. I did as we agreed.
- GAI. Bring me the girl immediately or I'll stab you with my sword as a pig, you filthy rascal!
- PORN. Go pierce yourself, you flashy fanfaron. How dare you threaten me! The girl was taken away, but you will be carried away if you keep on insulting me like this. I don't owe you anything, except for a few good kicks...
- GAI. You, you want to kick me?
- PORN. Not only that I want to – I will do it if you won't stop being a nuisance.
- GAI. Some filthy pimp won't poke fun at me, nor bring all my brave warrior deeds to naught. This sword and shield helped to petrify quite a few military ranks... If you don't give me the girl, I'll take care that you will be carried from the battlefield by ants – piece after the piece!
- PORN. (*drawing one object after another from the folds of his toga*) This comb, this mirror, these hair curlers, this powder box, this towel and these eye-brow tongs helped to prettify quite a few faces. I care about your words just about the same as about those of the cleaner of my latrine. I gave the girl to the man who brought me the money from you.
- GAI. And who was that, may I ask?

- PORN. Some Dickus I think was his name. He said he was your freedman.
- GAI. My freedman? Oh no! It must have been Darmojed, that's for sure. How stupid of me that I swallowed his hook so easily! Now I can clearly see it was also him who deprived me of my signet ring, my pride...
- PORN. (*frivolously*) If Darmojed deprived you of your pride, Gaius, it probably means you won't be of any use at the lancers' anymore, right?

In the last act, all main characters meet on the stage, and an unexpected turn occurs in the plot, called the anagnorisis, recognition: Erotium recognizes soldier's signet ring as the one of her father's and, consequently, identifies Gaius as her brother.

### **DARMOJED, ERROTIVM AND THE SIGNET RING, V. 602–608**

- ERR. Ask him where he got the ring. My father used to have one like that.
- DAR. (*derisively*) My maternal aunt used to have one like that too.
- ERR. My mother gave it to him!
- DAR. And your dad to you.
- ERR. You are talking through your hat.
- DAR. That's my biggest expertise. It makes the life easier, doesn't it? – What now?
- ERR. Please, do not prevent me from knowing my parents!
- DAR. Me – preventing you? How could I? Do you think they have been miraculously caught in this ring or something?
- ERR. I was born free!
- DAR. Just like so many others who happen to be slaves now.

As we learn from the dialogue, Erotium was born free but kidnapped as a child, and ended up in the Pimp's brothel. The scene brings a happy family reunion concluded by the Soldier betrothing his sister Erotium to Phaedromus.

## **ERROTUM, GAIUS AND ROMANTICUS, V. 635–658**

### **ANAGNORISIS**

GAI. I'll tell you. Stand up! Listen to me carefully, all of you. This ring belonged to my father, Fatalerrorius. He bequeathed it to me, his son, on his deathbed – as tradition requires.

ERR. Gods save me!

GAI. By which he made me his rightful heir.

ERR. Gods of the family hearth, I have always venerated you. Welcome, brother!

GAI. What? You? Sister? Mine? If I am to believe you, tell me what was our mother's name?

ERR. Clytemnestra.

GAI. And the nurse's?

ERR. Nutritia. It was her who took me to the festival of the Great Dionysia to see a theatre performance. As soon as we came there and she put me on the seat, a fierce wind came which overturned the scaffoldings, collapsing them to the ground. I was terribly afraid. Suddenly, someone grabbed me and carried me away – I was shaking all around, scared to death – don't even know who that mysterious rescuer was.

GAI. I remember the horror. But tell me, where is the person who carried you away now?

ERR. I don't have the slightest idea. But I still do have the ring I had with me when I got lost.

GAI. A ring? Show it to me, please.

DAR. Don't be a fool! Don't give it away!

ERR. Leave me alone. (*handing the ring over to the soldier*)

- GAI. By all the Olympian Gods, it is the ring I gave you for your birthday! I'd swear by bell on it. My sister!
- ERR. My brother!
- ROM. Let the gods bless this happy meeting.

This is not the end of the story, though; it is necessary to get back the money from the pimp and return it to the soldier as was set by an agreement according to which the soldier would get a refund if it will be proven that the girl is a daughter of free parents, not a slave. The pimp is, at first, hesitant concerning the refund, but when an imitation of a trial is performed with him as the accused, he yields to fulfil his promise and the plot is quickly heading for a happy ending:

*PH. tu, miles, apud me cenabis. hodie fient nuptiae.*  
*TH. quae res bene uortat mi et uobis! spectatores, plaudite.*

- ROM. Gaius, I invite you to the wedding feast. The marriage will be consummated today.
- DAR. Let all these things end happily and let all of us be well! Spectators, applaud!

**English translation of the booklet:** Eliška Poláčková

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