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## Significant Gestures: Two Medieval Illustrations of Classical Theatre

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In this paper I shall look at two medieval illustrations of supposed performances of classical drama, both of which are to be found in manuscripts now in the Vatican Library. The first is on fol. 1v of Cod.Vat.Urb.Lat. 355, a commentary on the tragedies of Seneca by the English Dominican Nicholas Trevet (ca. 1258 – ca. 1330) which one of his editors dates to about 1315.<sup>1</sup> Trevet's prologue to the commentary on *Hercules Furens*, which begins the work, contains an interesting if curious description of the classical theatre, and the full-page frontispiece miniature depicts how *Hercules Furens* is supposed to have looked in performance in a semi-circular theatrical space (see Plate 1).

The manuscript appears to originate from Urbino or its territory. It is usually dated to the mid- or later 14th century,<sup>2</sup> but the first side of its main text (fol. 5r, see Plate 2) has, in the middle of its bottom margin, a shield with diagonal blue and gold stripes (the arms of Urbino), with the initials .F. .C. on either side of it, presumably standing for *F. Comes*. This shows that the manuscript was made, or at least illustrated, for a Count of Urbino whose name began with F. Only two counts of Urbino fulfill this condition, both named Federico,<sup>3</sup> and the more probable of the two in terms of date is Count Federico I da Montefeltro (ruled 1300-22);<sup>4</sup> the other is Federico II (ruled 1444-82, but with the title of Duke from 1474),<sup>5</sup> but in this case the decoration must have been added in the fifteenth century, and there is no evidence, so far as I know, that it is any later than the rest of the manuscript. If the identification of Federico I as the first owner of the manuscript is correct, it must have been illustrated before his violent death at the hands of the citizens of Urbino in 1322; this would make it one of the earliest surviving copies of this work by Trevet.

Trevet's commentary was hugely popular and influential, especially in Italy, and some of the many manuscripts of it are beautifully illustrated with painted initials depicting scenes from Seneca's tragedies;<sup>6</sup> however, I have not yet found any other

manuscript which contains anything like the Urbino miniature, or any other contemporary illustration which could be said to depict a classical performance rather than a dramatic narrative or an astronomical diagram.<sup>7</sup> If it proves to be indeed the case that this is the only early version of this illustration, it will seem probable that anything which the illustrator has added to Trevet's prologue did not make up any part of Trevet's intention; there would thus be no reason to link it to any country other than Italy.

Trevet includes a brief description of the physical space of the classical theatre, as follows:

Et nota quod tragedie et comedie solebant in theatro hoc modo recitari: theatrum erat area semicircularis, in cuius medio erat parva domuncula, que scena dicebatur, in qua erat pulpitum super quod poeta carmina pronunciabat; extra vero erant mimi, qui carminum prononciationem gestu corporis effigiabant per adaptionem ad quemlibet ex cuius persona loquebatur. Unde cum hoc primum carmen legebatur mimus effigiebat Iunonem conquerentem et invitantem Furias infernales ad infestandum Herculem.<sup>8</sup>

[ 'And notice that tragedies and comedies used to be recited in the theatre in this way: the theatre was a semi-circular area, in the middle of which there was a little house called the *scena*, in which there was a pulpit on which the poet pronounced the songs; outside, indeed, were the actors, who figured forth the prononciation of the songs with bodily gesture, adapting them to whichever person was speaking. Thus while this first song was being read, an actor would depict Juno complaining and summoning the hellish Furies to attack Hercules. ]

The frontispiece follows this fairly closely, but its semi-circular area includes only the *poeta*, the *mimi* and the Chorus, while the audience, labelled *populus expectans* 'the watching people', look on from the two roughly triangular spaces outside the semicircle; the upper group of audience appears to be sitting on some grass, and a small flecked area behind the lower group may be intended to carry the same meaning.

The semi-circular area is divided into two roughly equal halves, with all the *mimi* (and the stars and the Furies, see below) crowded into the top half, while the bottom half is occupied only by the Chorus. Bisecting the clearly-marked boundary between the two, right in the middle of the semi-circular area, is a small crenellated

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structure in which the *poeta* (a crowned figure) stands reading from a large book on a lectern.

The upper half of the semicircular area includes all the play's characters except the Chorus, and illustrates various different moments in the text; it must be read from left to right. At the left is the tall crowned figure of Juno, pointing with her left hand to the stars (depicted in a small defined area above and to the right of her), which are full of the evidence of Jove's infidelities to her (cf. *Hercules Furens* 1-29);<sup>9</sup> with her right hand, she indicates the Furies below her, calling on them to attack Hercules (cf. *Hercules Furens* 100-22).<sup>10</sup> The subject-matter for both these gestures is clearly derived from the last sentence of Trevet's description of the theatre, quoted above.

To the right of Juno are the figures of Amphitruon and Megeira, the stepfather and the wife of Hercules. Amphitruon has his left hand raised in lamenting prayer to Jove to bring the trials of Hercules to an end (cf. *Hercules Furens* 205-48)<sup>11</sup> and points downwards with his right hand, in a gesture which echoes that of Juno, indicating the present exile of Hercules in the underworld. Megeira joins with her right hand in Amphitruon's prayer (cf. her vow of sacrifice to Jove and Ceres, *Hercules Furens* 299-302),<sup>12</sup> while her left hand is raised in front of her in a gesture which probably expresses her loyalty to Hercules, to whom her first speech is addressed in his absence (cf. Plate 3).<sup>13</sup>

To the right of Megeira is the tyrant Lycus, crowned and carrying in his right hand the sceptre which should rightly be that of Hercules (as described by Megeira when he first appears (*Hercules Furens* 329-31)).<sup>14</sup> His left hand is raised as if to ward off the attack of Hercules, who stands to his right brandishing a mace (Lycus is killed offstage by the returning Hercules between the hero's first exit at line 640 and his return, announcing the tyrant's death, in *Hercules Furens* 895-99).<sup>15</sup>

To the right of Lycus is Hercules, the only figure who cannot be identified with a particular moment of the play; since he is the protagonist, we seem to be offered a generalised view of his appearance, though some details may be derived from Juno's first description of him. She states that *armatus venit / leone et hydra* 'he has come armed with lion and hydra' (*Hercules Furens* 45-46),<sup>16</sup> because he wears the skin of the Nemean lion and has dipped his arrows in the Hydra's venom. Most illustrators depict the lion's skin as a cloak draped over his shoulders, sometimes with the lion's head forming the hood (see e.g. the opening illuminated initial in another Trevet manuscript, Cod. Vat. Lat. 1647, fol. 1r, Plate 4), but this artist has interpreted it rather oddly, as a full 'catsuit' of armour which covers his whole body except his face and hands, and even incorporates the lion's ears, hind claws and tail. At his belt Hercules carries a small bundle of very short arrows, tipped with a small splash of green which

probably represents the Hydra's poison. In his right hand he wields a metal mace, which is spiked at both ends, and in his left he holds a very large bow. After his deranged slaughter of his wife and sons, Hercules himself describes his weapons as arrows, bow and club, as he vows to destroy them (*Hercules Furens* 1231-37);<sup>17</sup> but the obviously metal mace seems an odd version of the *stipes* 'tree-trunk' referred to here.<sup>18</sup>

To the right of Hercules we see Amphytrion again (now with a grey beard and hair, and wearing a dull, russet-coloured robe which the artist may have intended to represent sackcloth), holding up both hands in lamentation; facing him is Theseus, who is grasping his right wrist. This represents the moment when Theseus takes Amphytrion's hand to dissuade him from killing himself near the end of the play (*Hercules Furens* 1308-21).<sup>19</sup>

The lower half of the semicircular area is occupied only by the Chorus, who are explained by Trevet in the course of his exposition of their first speech (*Hercules Furens* 125-204):<sup>20</sup>

Quia, ut prius dictum est, ad poetam tragicum pertinet describere luctuosos casus magnorum virorum, solent autem de talibus multi esse rumores in populo et diversa ferri iudicia, ideo Seneca in suis tragediis, ad representandum tales rumores et tali iudicia populi, interpolatim introducit chorum de talibus canentem.

[‘Because, as has been said before, it is the business of a tragic poet to describe the lamentable falls of great men, and yet it is usual for there to be many rumours among the people about such things and various verdicts expressed about them; therefore Seneca in his tragedies introduces a chorus singing about such things, in order to represent such rumours and popular judgements.’]<sup>21</sup>

The only figures depicted in the miniature who are not characters in the play are the audience and the Furies (depicted as naked women sitting among flames, with green serpents perched on their heads and labelled *furie infernales*). The audience are referred to by Trevet when he is discussing the last of the ‘causes’ of the tragedy:

Causa finalis est delectatio populi audientis . . .

[‘The final cause is the entertainment of the listening audience’]<sup>22</sup>

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and this is probably the source of the label *populus expectans* in the miniature. The Furies are explained in Trevet's commentary on the last paragraph of Juno's opening speech, explaining *Hercules Furens* 100-03:

Incipite, famulae Ditis, ardentem citae  
concutite pinum et agmen horrendum anguibus  
Megaera ducat atque luctifica manu  
vastam rogo flagrante corripiat trabem.

['Begin, handmaids of Dis, make haste to brandish the burning pine; let Megaera lead on her band bristling with serpents and with baleful hand snatch a huge faggot from the blazing pyre.']\*<sup>23</sup>

Trevet adds to this:

Ysidorus vero *Ethymologiarum* libro VIII capitulo ultimo dicit sic: 'aiunt et tres Furias feminas crinitas serpentibus, propter tres affectus, qui in animis hominum multas perturbationes gignunt, et interdum cogunt ita delinquere, ut nec fame nec periculi sui respectum habere permittant. Ira, que vindictam cupit; cupiditas, que desiderat opes; libido, que appetit voluptates.' Quamvis autem quelibet istarum sit causa discordie, precipue tamen ira; et ideo, quia secundum distinctionem Fulgentii omnes Furie ad iram videntur reduci, secundum diversos gradus ita, quod maximus gradus ire videtur attribui Megere, potest dici quod hic vocat discordem deam Megeram; unde et in sequentibus eam specialiter evocat.

['Indeed, Isidore in his *Etymologiae* Book VIII says this in the last chapter: "They also say that the Furies are three women with serpents for hair, on account of three dispositions which bring forth many disturbances in the souls of men, forcing them for the time being so to go astray that they do not allow them to pay any attention either to hunger or to their own danger: anger, which wants revenge; greed, which desires wealth; lust, which seeks indulgence." But although any of these can be the cause of discord, it is especially so with anger. Following the explanation of Fulgentius, all the Furies can be seen to come down to anger, arrived at by different steps; and so, because the largest step, of

anger, is seen to be attributed to Megeira, it can be said that here she (i.e. Juno) calls on Megeira as goddess of discord; hence she also invokes her particularly in what follows.]

It may be that Isidore and Trevet have both mistaken gorgons for furies, but at least this explains why the Furies are shown sitting in flames and have serpents on their heads (though the artist has given them normal hair as well).

However, there are still a number of features of the miniature which cannot be derived from either Seneca's text or Trevet's commentary. The fact that the *scena* (by which Trevet may have meant something like a covered stage) is here occupied only by the *poeta*, with the actors outside it (rather than merely outside his pulpit) is a misunderstanding of Trevet by the artist. This can be seen from Trevet's source, Isidore's *Etymologiae*, which makes it quite clear that the *scena* included the area occupied by the *mimi* as well as that of the *poeta*;<sup>24</sup> this mistake may also have led to the depiction of a lectern rather than a pulpit. But the audience sitting on the grass outside the semicircular area of the *theatrum* cannot come from Trevet's description, and neither can the literal presence of the Furies, the fact that they have hair as well as serpents on their heads, or their nakedness (though the last might derive from depictions of the damned in hell). The artist is not particularly sophisticated, and his iconography of Hercules is quite unrelated to that of the refined tradition of the illuminated initials which depict the hero, so a source in graphic art also seems rather unlikely.

I would like to suggest the possibility (which admittedly cannot be proved) that the artist had seen or been told about the ruins of an actual Roman theatre, of which a number survive in Italy even today.<sup>25</sup> Before excavation, many of these would have had grassy banks in the obvious audience seating area round the outside of the semicircular *plataea*; at Gubbio, for example, the upper part of the seating terraces remains higher than the modern ground level, and must have been easily visible in the middle ages; the terracing here is grass-covered even today (Plate 5, and compare Plate 1 with the site-plan of the theatre at Gubbio, Plate 6). Some theatres, notably that at Ostia antica, but see also the pillar bases at Gubbio, still have standing pillars near the stage area, which could have suggested the *domuncula* which Trevet calls the *scena* (Plate 7). It might also be possible to explain the presence of the naked furies as a representation of free-standing or relief statues. At Ostia there is a row of three grotesque carved masks in marble at the tops of three stone pillars at the back of the stage on the stage right side (Plate 8). At least one of them has a beard, but their long, heavily stylised hair and horrific open mouths might suggest that they were furies,

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especially if they had unbearded parallels elsewhere. The one element of an actual classical theatre which is conspicuously absent from the miniature is the raised stage; but as that was normally made of wood and can be reconstructed today only from the brick pillars used to support it, it would not have been evident to a medieval observer.

There can be no certainty about where the artist or his informant might have seen the ruins of a Roman theatre, but if he was based somewhere in the territory of Urbino, it might well have been the one at Gubbio, some sixty kilometres from Urbino. Gubbio was an independent *comune* until it voluntarily submitted to the Montefeltri, Counts of Urbino, in 1384, but there must always have been many contacts between the two towns, and Gubbio might easily have provided the artist with an informant. If the illustration was actually copied by the Urbino artist from another manuscript, it would probably be impossible to identify the place which inspired that lost source.

My conclusion – a slightly melancholy one from the point of view of a northern European scholar – is that this miniature has great interest for the rediscovery of classical tragedy in fourteenth-century Italy, but probably cannot be taken as representative of a scholarly view from northern Europe except in so far as it reflects the rather theoretical text of Trevet's commentary. It is certainly not safe to take it as a guide to any sort of performance north of the Alps, though it might help us to visualise such classically-influenced texts as Albertino Mussato's *Ecerinis*, which was probably influenced by Trevet and was read aloud (and perhaps mimed?) annually at Padua from 1318.<sup>26</sup>

My second medieval representation of a classical theatre illustrates a comedy – or to be more exact, an incident during the performance of a comedy. It is to be found in an illustrated manuscript of the plays of Terence, Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305, fol. 8v (Plate 9), which dates from the late 11th or early 12th century and probably comes from northern France. There is a rich tradition of illustrated manuscripts of Terence, and where we can attribute a place of origin to them they usually seem to come from northern Europe.<sup>27</sup> Several of them have a full-page illustration at this point, usually of a house-shaped cupboard with shelves on which are displayed the masks needed to portray the various character-types in the plays (Plate 10); this is the earliest one I have seen so far which replaces this 'cupboard' with a dramatic scene.<sup>28</sup>

The text in Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305 begins with an explanatory preface about the circumstances of Terence's life and the basic plots of his comedies; this explains how Terence was captured and enslaved following the fall of Carthage, forced to walk in Scipio's triumphal procession with his hands tied behind his back, but later freed by Scipio's generosity. Seeing the Roman love of the theatre, he composed a version of



the *Andria*, but it was condemned by jealous rivals even after he had revised its metre. The preface continues:

Illud etiam animadvertendum has fabulas non ab ipso esse recitatas in scena, sed a Calliopio, clarissimo viro satisque eruditissimo, cui ipse precipue adherebat cuique ope sustentabatur et auctoritate audiebatur. Modulator autem harum fabularum fuit Flaccus. Quociescumque cum recitabantur erat modulator, et alii qui gestu corporis eos affectus agebant.<sup>29</sup>

[It must also be noted that these stories were not recited on the stage by Terence himself, but by Calliopus, a famous and quite learned man, to whom he was particularly attached, by whose wealth he was supported and by whose authority he obtained a hearing. However, the director of music for these fictions was Flaccus. He was the musical director whenever they were recited, and there were others who acted them with bodily gesture of their emotion.]

The miniature shows a house-shaped structure (possibly derived from the more usual cupboard but clearly implying a building), within which there are three rows of figures, all clearly labelled.

The top row is dominated by the central figure of Calliopus, who is seated on a throne reading from a large book on a lectern to his right; the right-hand page of the book is blank, while the text on the left-hand page reads *poeta cum primum animum*, 'when the poet first (directed) his mind (to write)', the opening words of the Prologue of the *Andria*. His arms are crossed: his right hand (traditionally used for the 'lead' gesture) keeps his place in the book, while his left points to the figure to the left of him, also seated, who is labelled *TERENCIVS*. To the right and facing him are two figures, labelled *LVSCIVS LIVINIVS / ADVERSARII*. One of them, who is sitting with his right leg crossed over his left, is pointing scornfully with his right index finger towards Calliopus; the other has his right arm round the shoulders of the first, presumably in support of his objection to Terence's play.

Below these figures, but evidently intended to be read as part of the same scene, there are seven men, seen only from the waist up, who are labelled *ROMANI*. Several of them are making significant gestures, which (working from left to right) can be summarised as follows:

No. 1 points with his right index finger to his own head, and with his left

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index finger to the *Adversarii*; he is probably expressing his opinion that they are mad.

No. 3 looks up, probably towards the *Adversarii*; with his right hand he is making what looks like a rejection gesture, while his left points down towards the actors below him. His probable meaning is 'go away, I want to concentrate on the play'.

No. 4 looks up, probably towards *Calliopus*, and points upward with his right index finger across his body; he is probably listening to *Calliopus*.

No. 5 looks up and left towards *Calliopus* and *Terence*; he has his right hand on his hip (possibly a gesture of mockery)<sup>30</sup> while his left index finger points across his body towards *Terence* – unlike the others, he may be sympathising with the *Adversarii*.

No. 6 looks left towards *Terence* and gestures only with his left hand, palm upwards and possibly with the thumb meeting the index finger – a gesture which *Dodwell* identifies as approval.<sup>31</sup>

Below this straight line of Roman audience there is a wavy line with an orange-coloured 'filler' area below it. This is a fairly common device indicating a boundary between one scene or level of narrative and another, and it shows that the *Romani* are part of the same scene as *Calliopus* and distinct from the bottom row of figures, which is divided into two by a vertical line.

The bottom left scene shows *Simo* (the father) on the left and the shock-haired figure of the slave *Davus* on the right. This probably represents the last scene of Act II (*Andria* 432-58), which is often illustrated in other *Terence* manuscripts (e.g. Vat.Lat. 3868) but does not receive a separate picture in this one. *Simo* points with his right hand across his body towards *Davus*, while his left hand can be seen drooping under his cloak. *Davus* points with his right hand towards *Simo*, and his left hand is on his hip. In this scene *Simo* is accusing *Davus* of trickery (the probable meaning of his accusing finger) but is perplexed because *Davus* is not reacting as he expected; *Davus* is pretending to be attentive and informative about the intentions of his young master *Pamphilus*, but is actually tricking the old man and mocking him (the probable meaning of the hand on his hip).

The right-hand scene in the bottom row shows *Pamphilus* (the young lover) on the left and *Glycerium* (his mistress) on the right. *Pamphilus* is holding up in his right hand something that looks like a sheet of parchment, and grasping *Glycerium* by the upper arm with his left; she is facing him with her hands on her hips. As *Glycerium* only speaks offstage, it is difficult to place this scene in the play, but it might represent Act IV scene 2 (*Andria* 684-708), which ends with *Pamphilus* going

in to comfort Glycerium, who has just borne his child. Again, Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305 gives no other picture of this scene; at the point in the text where it would appear on fol. 20v, there is a marginal note:

Egrediens Misis a Glicerio ut quaereret Pamphilum et ad se iuberet uenire, hoc secum cepit dicere.

[‘Mysis, going out from Glycerium to look for Pamphilus and urge him to come to her, began to say this to herself.’]

However, if this identification is right, the artist of Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305 has not used the traditional version of the scene, which is found in manuscripts such as Vat. Lat. 3868 and Oxford Bodleian Auct. F.12.13. They do not depict Glycerium at all, but show Mysis coming out of the house to summon Pamphilus, whom she finds in the company of Charinus (his friend) and Davus. It remains possible that this scene represents an imaginary moment after the end of the play, when Pamphilus will show Glycerium the vital evidence which allows him to marry her, or perhaps their fathers’ written permission.

The first obvious feature of the ‘stage’ miniature in Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305 is that it is placed in a building, with no indication of any circular or semi-circular acting area. Calliopius is seen reading, like the *poeta* in the Seneca miniature, but he has no pulpit or ‘little house’, and it is not clear from either the miniature or the preface whether he was thought of as reciting any more of the play than the Prologue (which he is reading in the picture). The lively and varied tradition of dramatic scholia in the illustrated Terence manuscripts suggests quite strongly that there was a continuing tradition of performance, probably for educational purposes, and this would be better served by allowing each actor to speak his own part than by having a single reader read the whole play aloud. The rectangular building may therefore represent the actuality of medieval performance.

The actors depicted in the Terence manuscripts are obviously using a traditional code of gesture. Over and over again, we see pictures in which their lead emotions are indicated with the right hand and any subsidiary one with the left (even when this results in an awkward crossing of arms); and the meaning of each common gesture can similarly be seen from the fact that it is repeated many times in different illustrations. Many of these gestures probably derive from ancient Roman theatre, but they clearly continued to have currency, and to change over time. The earliest manuscripts, such as Cod.Vat.Lat. 3868 (c. 820-30, from Corvey, Westphalen) and Florence, Codex Ambrosianus H. 75 Inf. (10th century, probably from Fleury or Orleans), depict all

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characters in reasonable approximations to ancient Roman dress, while the costumes in Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305 and Oxford, Bodleian Auct. F.12.13 (12th century, from St. Albans or Canterbury) show the cloaks, tunics and figure-hugging female dresses with drooping sleeves that were fashionable in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305 also shows two other important changes, as we can see by comparing its illustration of *Andria* 581 with that in the earlier Cod. Vat. 3868 and the more conservative Oxford manuscript (Plates 12-14). In this scene, Davus enters, urging his master's father Simo to hurry on the arrangements for his master's marriage, which he feels confident the latter will refuse, only to be dismayed by the news that Simo and Chremes (the girl's father) have just agreed on the marriage; Chremes then exits (*Andria* 595) to tell the bride to get ready.

In the Oxford illustration, which is similar to those in earlier manuscripts, Davus, Simo and Chremes are all masked, and all lead gestures are done with the right hand. Davus stretches his right arm across the front of his body in order to greet Simo and urge him on; Simo's right hand fingers the beard of his mask in a gesture of meditation (probably reflecting his uncertainty about whether Davus can be trusted or not – see *Andria* 582ff.); Chremes faces Simo and extends his right hand in a gesture commonly used to show that a character is listening to another (Simo has just overcome his doubts about the marriage).

In Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305, none of the characters is masked. Davus makes the same gesture, but with the left, 'upstage' arm; Simo's gesture of meditation is replaced with one of instruction to Chremes, again with the left hand; Chremes is turning away from the others and exiting into his house, indicating with his left hand that he is going to make preparations for the wedding (which presumably explains the servant with a large fish at the right of the picture). All three characters are using left-arm gestures, which enable them to avoid turning away from us or partially hiding their own faces or bodies.

When we turn back to the 'stage' illustration at the beginning of the manuscript, we again find that no one is masked, but the tradition of gesture is more mixed. Some characters, of course, can naturally use the right arm as the 'upstage' arm, and these would look the same according to either convention; but Calliopiuss, the 5th Roman and Simo all gesture across their bodies with the right arm (the 'old' tradition). The 6th Roman, by contrast, gestures only with his left arm, because that is more natural to his pose and the space available; it is as if the first trace of a new acting tradition has already invaded this first illustration in the manuscript, to be followed by many more.

This is a vital change, because it also implies a change of performance setting.

In ancient Roman theatres, the audience might be on three sides of the actor, and his gestures would inevitably hide his body or face-mask for at least part of the audience. There was therefore no advantage in varying the hand with which the lead gesture was made, and it helped audience recognition always to use the right (since most actors and audience-members would be right-handed). But when performance was at one end of a medieval hall, most of the audience (and all the most important members of the audience) would be roughly on the same side of the actor, as in a modern proscenium arch theatre; a gesture with the 'downstage' hand could therefore obscure the actor's performance, especially if he was no longer wearing a mask and was therefore able to use facial expression as well as body gesture. This suggests that the illustrations are not merely copies of an extinct tradition, but reflections of changing conditions in continuing performance.

I would like to finish by returning to the fourteenth-century Urbino miniature with which I began. It clearly sets out to portray the conventions of classical performance as accurately as possible, yet the 'new' conventions of which Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305 gives early intimations have now invaded even this self-conscious attempt to be 'historical'. None of the actors is masked, and at least three of them are 'leading' with the left-hand gesture. Juno points first (with her left index finger) to the evidence of Jove's adulteries in the stars, and only afterwards (with her right) to the Furies. The dominant gesture of the first Amphitryon figure is lament (with his raised left palm) for the labours of his stepson Hercules, and it is only later that we hear that Hercules is now in the underworld (the meaning of his downward-pointing right index finger). Lycus holds his sceptre in his right hand and gestures only with his left. It is difficult to tell which of Theseus' gestures is dominant: he restrains the second Amphitryon figure from suicide with his left hand and seems to admonish him (to stoicism?) with his right, but the latter, though perfectly natural, does not actually reflect anything he says in the play. The three Furies may be intended to represent statues rather than living actors, but the right-hand one is also making her predominant gesture of lament with her left hand. This artist shows no knowledge either that masks were worn in the Roman theatre or that lead gestures were made with the right hand.

One of the many contributions Meg Twycross has made to the advancement of early drama has been the exact attention which she has devoted to graphic art and what it can teach us. This study of two miniatures was inspired by her example. It has suggested that while the reconstruction of classical tragedy in the fourteenth century was largely a matter of reconstructive antiquarian study, Terence's comedies probably enjoyed a continuing tradition of performance, one whose conventions gradually

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adapted from those suitable for the semi-circular *theatrum* to those which suited a rectangular hall. The change may have taken place in northern Europe at some time around 1100, and Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305 probably provides some of the earliest evidence for it. Inconspicuous as it may seem, it was fundamental to the development of later theatre, and its results remain part of the conventions of theatre even today.<sup>32</sup>

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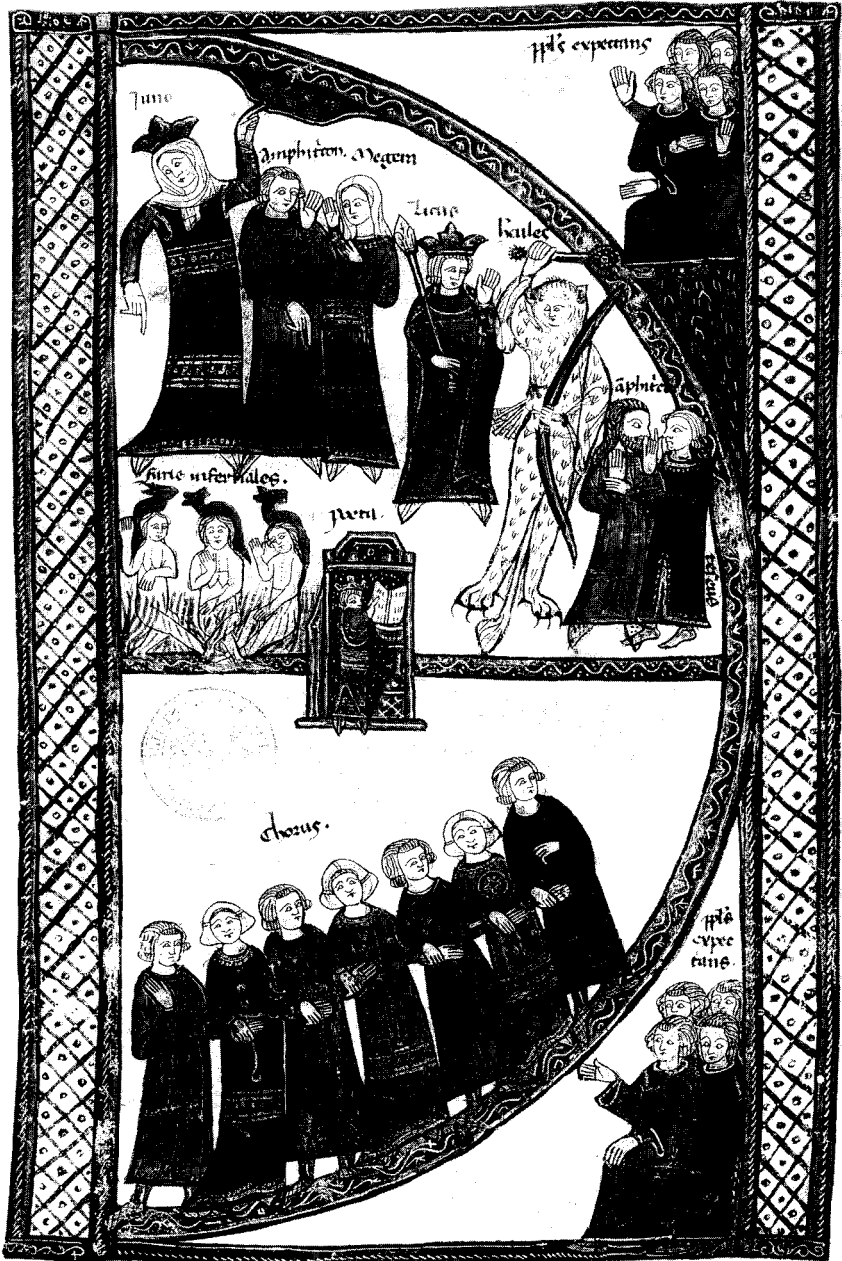


Plate 1. Cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 355, fol. lv; Trevet's commentary on Seneca: frontispiece miniature of an imaginary performance of *Hercules Furens*.

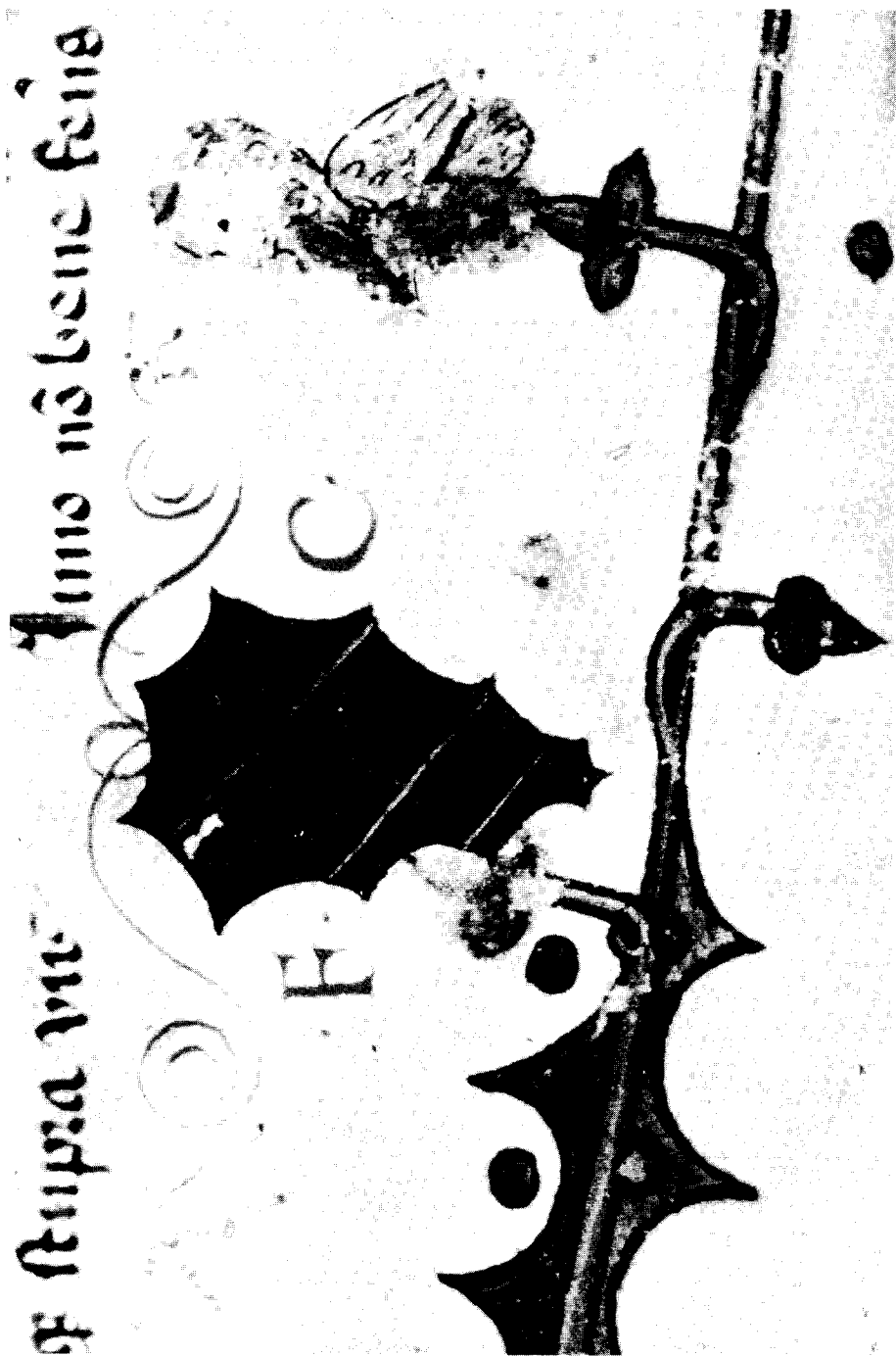


Plate 2. Cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 355, fol. 5r; the arms of Urbino with the initials of Federico I, Count of Urbino 1300-1322.





Plate 3. Paris, BN Lat. 3898, fol. 293: Gratian's *Decretals*: marriage scene.



Plate 4. Cod.Vat.Lat. 1647, fol. 1r: Trevet's commentary on Seneca: opening initial for *Hercules Furens*.



Plate 5. The Roman theatre, Gubbio, Umbria. Photo: John McKinnell.

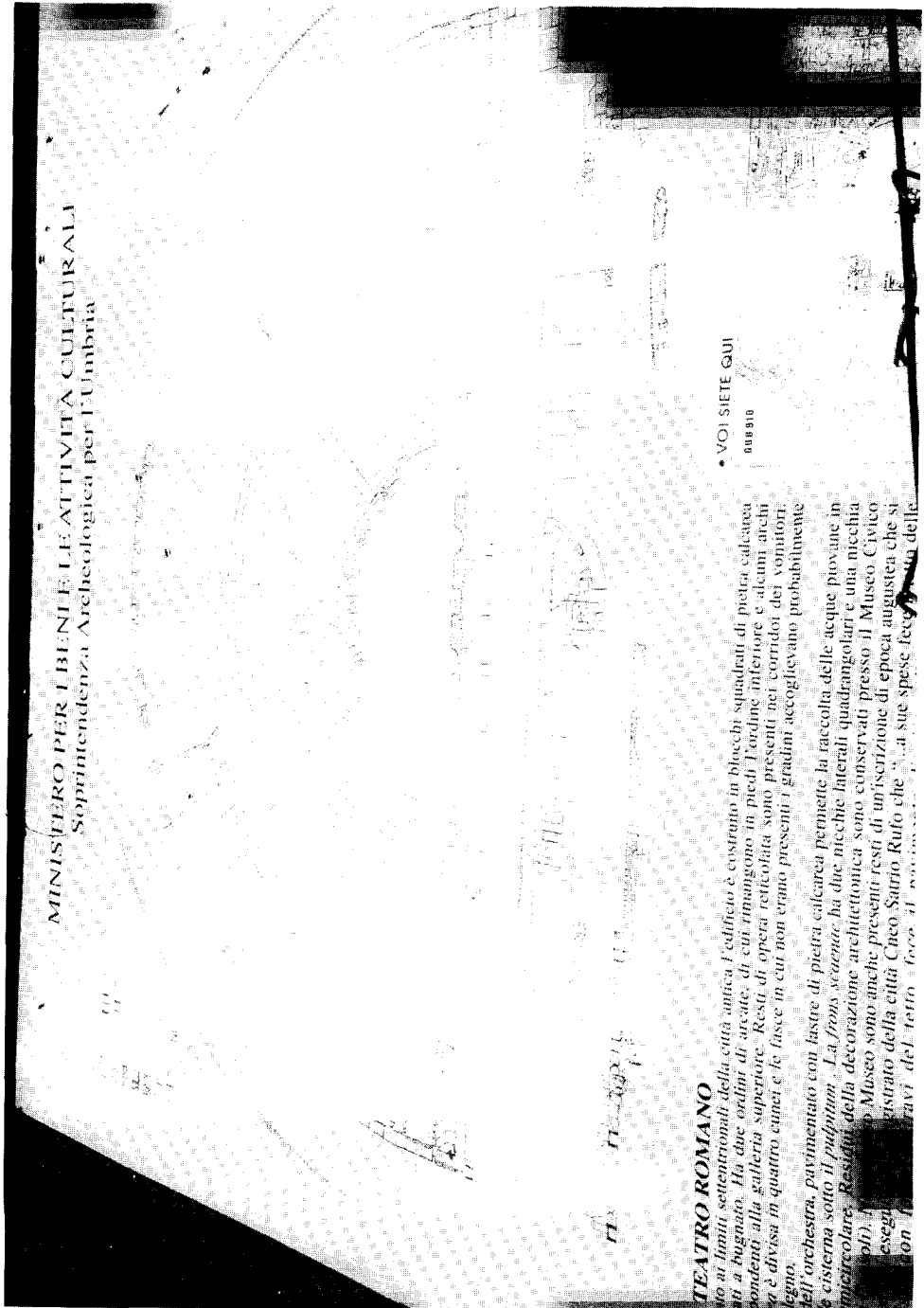


Plate 6. The Roman theatre, Gubbio, Umbria — site plan. Photo: John McKinnell.

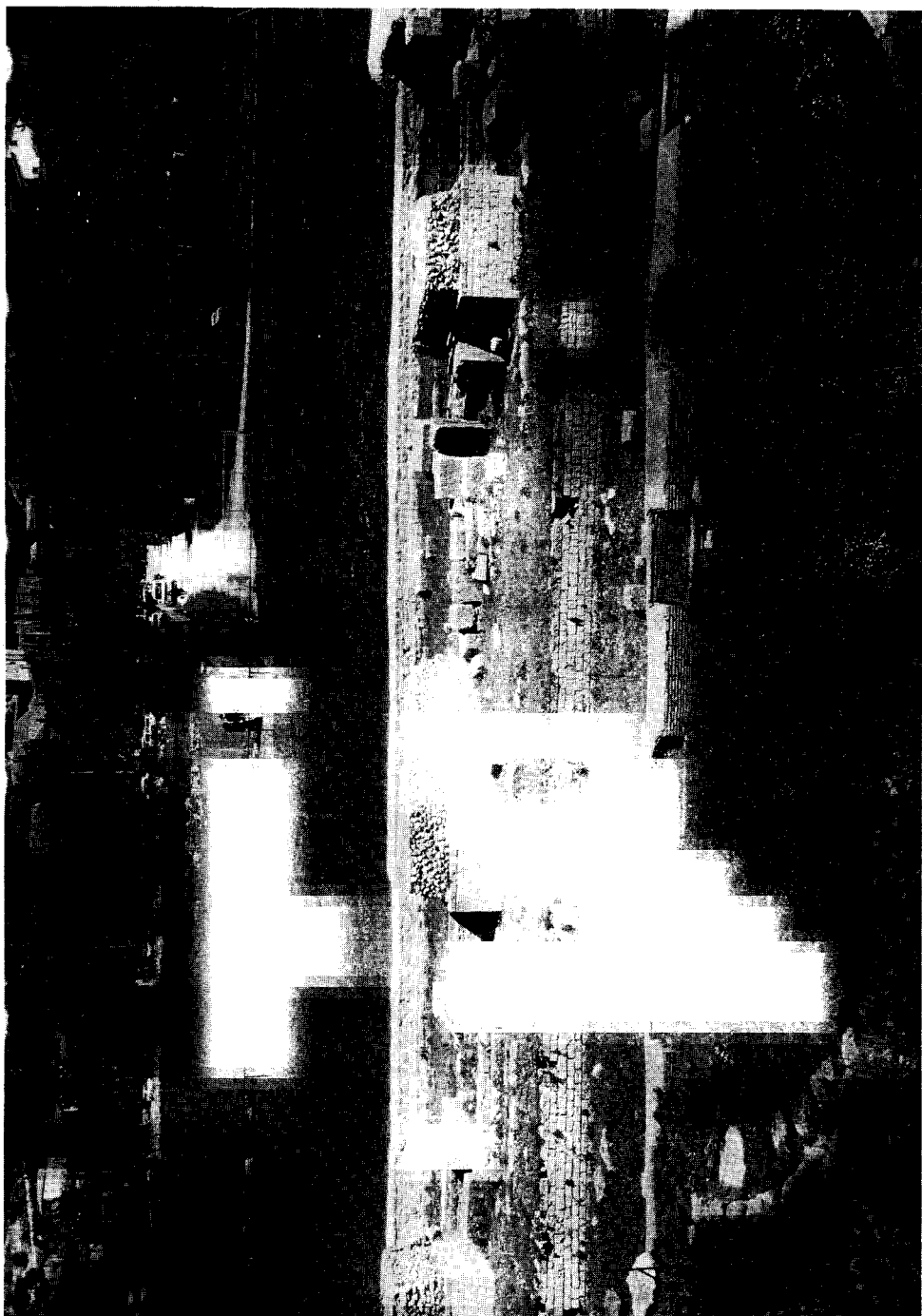


Plate 7. The Roman theatre, Gubbio, Umbria — stage view with column bases. Photo: John McKinnell.

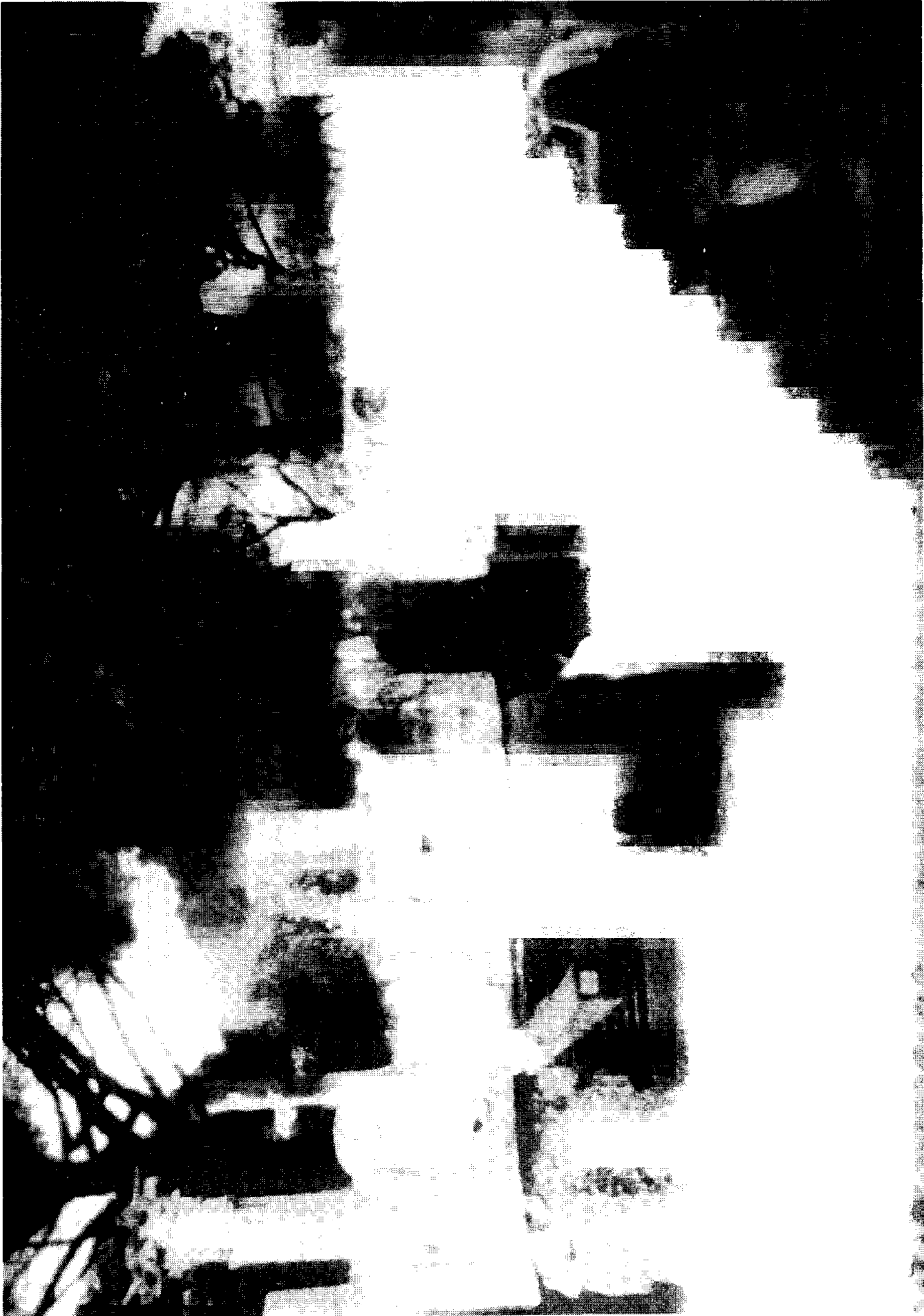


Plate 8. The Roman theatre, Ostia antica, Lazio: carvings of actors' masks. Photo: John McKinnell.



Plate 9. Cod. Vat. Lat. 3305, fol. 8v; the comedies of Terence: frontispiece miniature of a performance of the *Andria*.

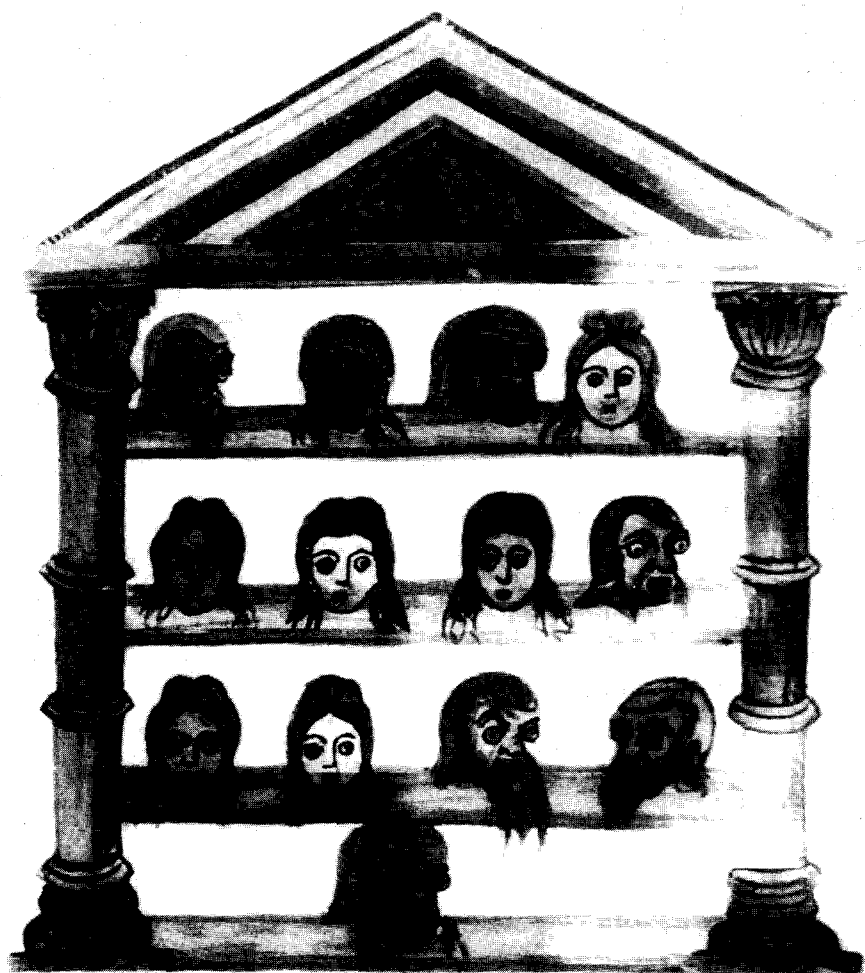


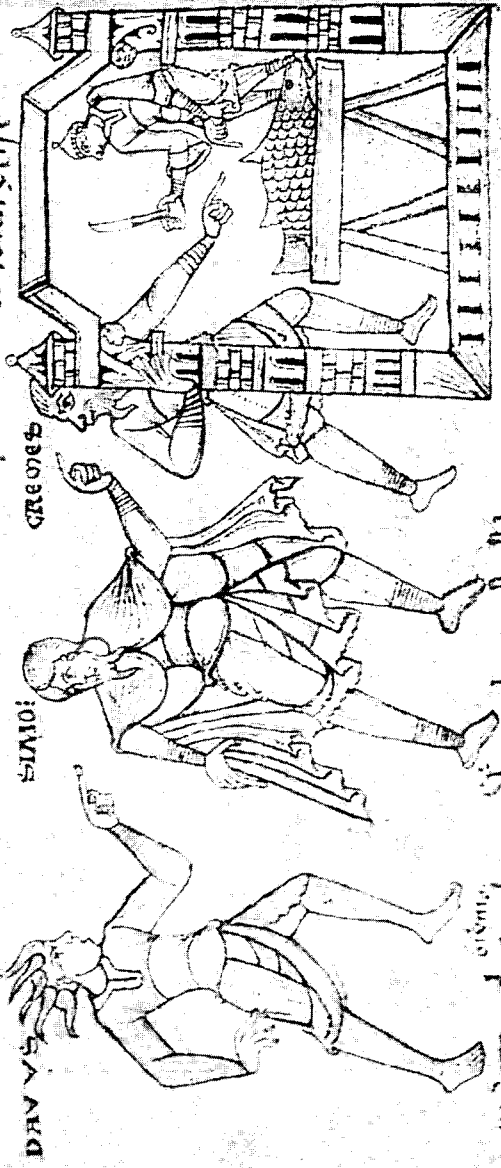
Plate 10. Cod.Vat.Lat. 3868, fol. 3r: the comedies of Terence: frontispiece miniature of actors' masks.





Plate 11. Vienna, Österreiches Nationalbibliothek Cod. 2739, fol. 20v: prayer book, illustration of those who rejoice in evil (see lower left figure).

ut se. Si ipse michi datus qui intus est eorum consilii dixit.  
 et si michi persuadet in partem quam ut matrem; num  
 confis facere filium nisi seret eadem hęc uelle? In te adeo iam es  
 audieris ubi. heus tuocare hinc dandum atq. ecce uideo foras exire.



dicit ibidem. Si quidnam est. Da cur in hoc non accessit?  
 in aduersariis. Syon. Audin tu illu? Ego dudum non  
 nichil uertissim clauie abste ne faceres idem. Quod  
 uulgus senioru solet facere clolis ut me deluderet. pptea  
 ad amos filius DAVID. Pro istis facere. Cum...

Plate 12. Cod. Vat. Lat. 3305, fol. 18v: illustration of *Andria* 581.

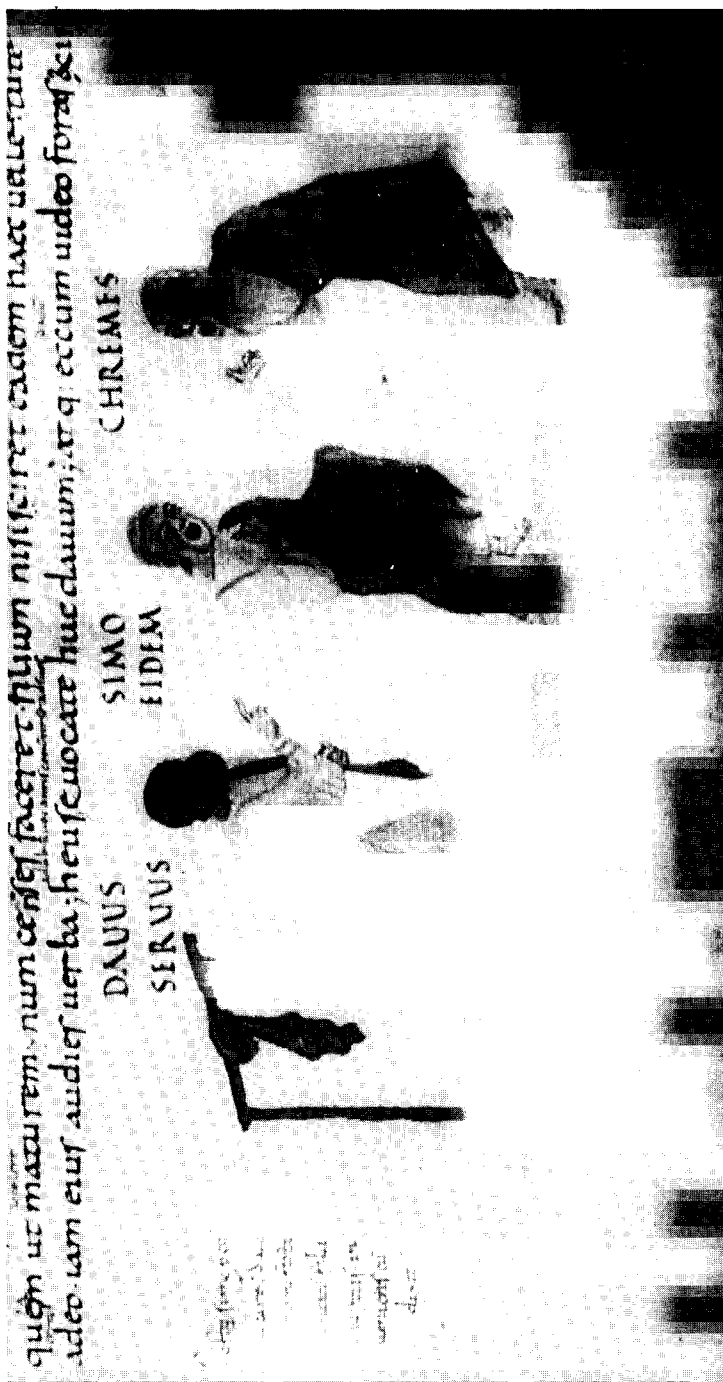


Plate 13. Cod. Vat. Lat. 3868, detail of fol. 12r: illustration of *Andria* 581.

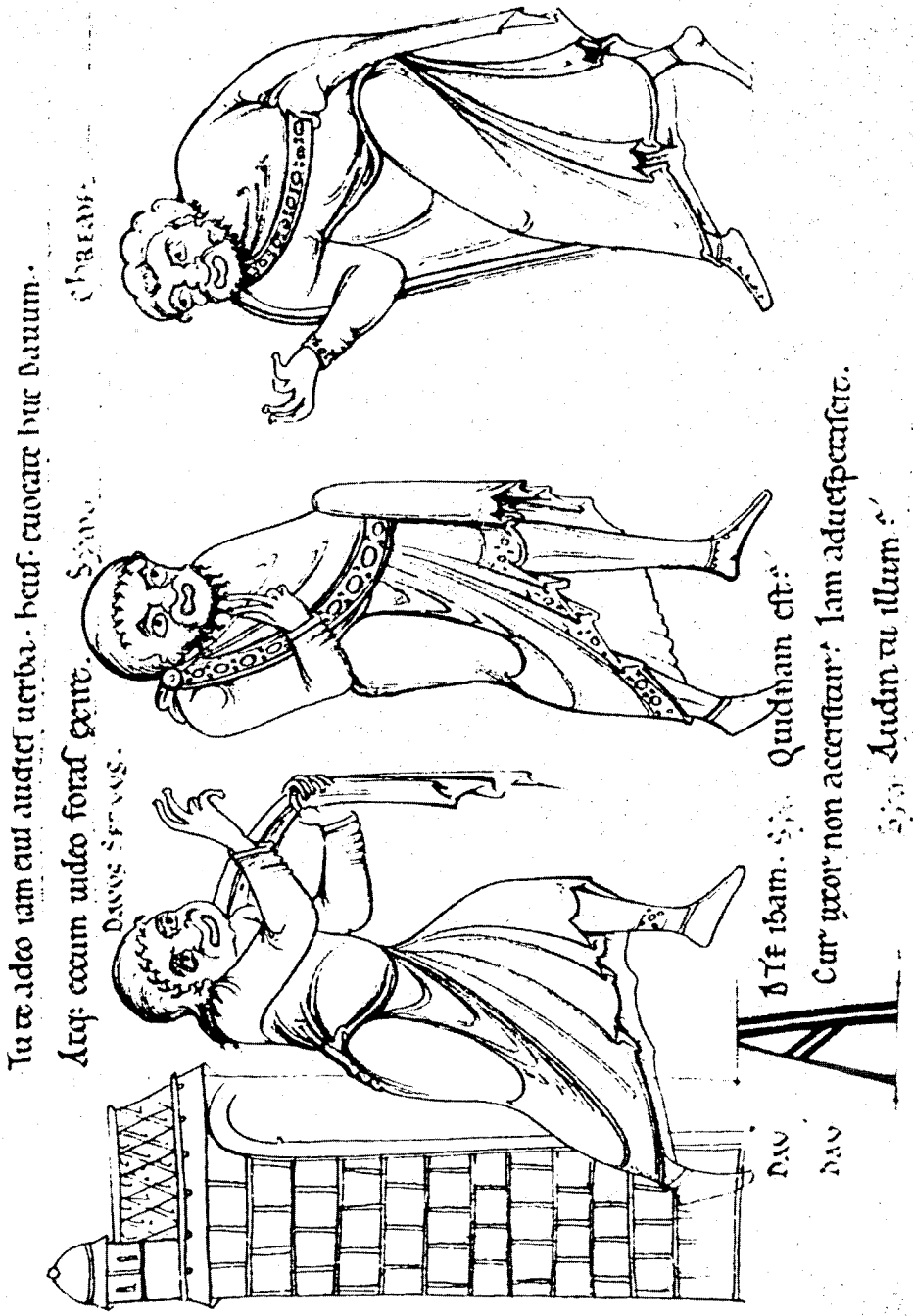


Plate 14. Oxford, Bodleian MS Auct. F.12.13, fol. 20v: illustration of *Andria* 581.

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NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Il Commento di Nicola Trevet al Tieste di Seneca*, ed. by Franceschini, VIII-IX.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Kipling, 34-35.

<sup>3</sup> For a brief historical account of the Montefeltri as counts of Urbino, see Michaud, vol. 29, pp. 62-65.

<sup>4</sup> For a record of his death, see Villani (1322) and Michaud, vol. 29, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Sestan, p. 516.

<sup>6</sup> Illustrated manuscripts of Trevet's work, with or without Seneca's text, include Cod.Vat.Lat. 1650 (1st half, 14th century); Cod.Vat.Urb.Lat. 356 (c. 1400); Cod.Vat.Lat. 1645 (15th century); and Milan, Trivult. 809 (14th century; I have not seen this manuscript, but the description of it in Santoro, 214-15 gives details of miniatures in the initials opening each tragedy, but not of any frontispiece illustration). Cod.Vat.Lat. 1647 (1391-92) is an illustrated copy of the tragedies without Trevet's commentary. Cod.Vat.Lat. 7611 (14th-15th century) and Cod.Vat.Lat. 13,003 (14th century, from the Ara Cæli monastery in Rome), both manuscripts of Trevet's commentary, leave spaces for miniatures which were never added. Breslau, Cod. Rehdigeranus 118, a late-14th-century manuscript of the tragedies with notes derived from Trevet's commentary, which was destroyed during the Second World War, also had initials with miniatures at the beginning of each tragedy, but apparently no frontispiece illustration (Ziegler, pp. 83-84).

Besides the staging frontispiece, Cod.Vat.Urb.Lat. 355 includes some illustrations of constellations, which also appear in Cod.Vat.Lat. 1650 and London, Society of Antiquaries 63 (see below) and probably were part of Trevet's original work; the first six are also in Padua, Bibl. Univ. 896 (first half, 14th century).

<sup>7</sup> I have also consulted the following manuscripts without miniatures: Padua, Patavinus Bibl. Univ. 896 (but see previous note); Oxford, Bodleian Ms. 292 (14th century); Bologna, Bibl. Univ. 1632 (15th century); Modena, Bibl. Estensis *Alpha*.R.8,10 (Lat. 712), (15th century, from Florence); Venice, Marcianus XII,41 (=3908) (15th century, with a colophon added in 1478).

London, Society of Antiquaries MS 63 (first half, 14th century) is now defective at the beginning and end, but can never have included a frontispiece stage illustration: an early (16th century?) reader has added some notes on a flyleaf added at the end (fol. 228r) and a tiny pen and ink diagram which consists of two adjacent semicircular lines labelled *teatrum* and inside them a small house-shape (labelled *scena*) with an arrow-like object within it that might be a lectern. This diagram must have been made from Trevet's opening description of the theatre at a time when the beginning of the manuscript was still complete, and it would have been unnecessary if there had also been a staging illustration. I

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am grateful to Dr. Bernard Nurse, Librarian of the Society of Antiquaries, for his help over their manuscript.

There are two further manuscripts which I have not seen: Paris, BN Lat. 8033 and 8038 (both 15th century), and a further one, apparently not illustrated, was destroyed during the war (Breslau, Cod. Rehdigeranus 122, 14th century, see Ziegler, p. 89).

<sup>8</sup> *L. Annaei Senecae Hercules Furens et Nicolai Treveti Expositio*, ed. Ussani, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Miller, pp. 4-7.

<sup>10</sup> Miller, pp. 12-13.

<sup>11</sup> Miller, pp. 18-23.

<sup>12</sup> Miller, pp. 26-27.

<sup>13</sup> Miller, pp. 24-27. For the same gesture, made by the bridesmaid in a miniature of a marriage in a fourteenth-century manuscript of Gratian's *Decretals* (Paris, BN lat. 3898, fol. 293), see Schmitt, Plate XXIV and my Plate 3.

<sup>14</sup> Miller, pp. 28-29.

<sup>15</sup> Miller, pp. 78-79.

<sup>16</sup> Miller, pp. 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> Miller, pp. 108-09.

<sup>18</sup> Amphitruon has earlier welcomed Hercules back from the underworld with a reference to his 'famous hand with huge club' (*alto nobilem trunco manum, Hercules Furens* 625, Miller, 56-57), and Lycus has referred to the club rather disparagingly as *clava* 'a knotted stick' (*Hercules Furens* 466, Miller, pp. 44-45); but it is hard to see how any of these could have produced the thoroughly medieval weapon depicted in the miniature.

<sup>19</sup> Miller, pp. 116-17.

<sup>20</sup> Miller, pp. 12-19.

<sup>21</sup> Ussani, pp. 29-30.

<sup>22</sup> Ussani, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Miller, pp. 12-13.

<sup>24</sup> 'Scena autem erat locus infra theatrum in modum domus instructa cum pulpito, qui pulpitus orchestra vocabatur, ubi cantabant comici, tragici, atque saltabant histriones et mimi' – 'But the *scena* was a place inside the theatre, built like a house and with a pulpit which was called the *orchestra*, where comic and tragic poets recited, and actors and mimes performed.' (Isidore, *Etymologiae*, Book XVIII, ch. 43).

<sup>25</sup> Those I have seen are at Brescia (Lombardia), Gubbio, (Umbria), Nora (Sardinia), Ostia antica (Lazio, near Rome), Spoleto (Umbria) and Ventimiglia (Liguria, on the Mediterranean near the French border); all share the same basic design, which is quite well represented by the miniature except for its omission of the raised stage.

<sup>26</sup> Lunari, pp. 44-45.



<sup>27</sup> See e.g. Vatican, Cod.Vat.Lat. 3868 (c. 820-30, from Corvey, Westphalen); Florence, Codex Ambrosianus H. 75 Inf. (10th century, probably from Fleury or Orleans, France); Paris, BN Lat. 12,322 (10th or 11th century, from Fulda, Germany); Vatican, Cod. Vat. Lat. 3305 (late 11th or early 12th century, probably from Northern France); Oxford, Bodleian Auct. F. 12. 13 (12th century, from St. Albans or Canterbury, England); Tours, Lat. 924 (12th century, from Tours, France); Paris, Arsenal 25 (early 15th century, from Paris). Further, see Rostagni, pp. 272-310; Jones and Morey, *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> A later example can be seen in MS Paris, Arsenal 25, and is helpfully reproduced by Kipling (Plate 5); this also features Calliopus, but Terence himself is no longer in the theatre, but can be seen in his house (bottom left) giving the script to Calliopus. More importantly, however, the *theatrum* has now become completely circular, Calliopus reads from within a canopied pulpit which is labelled *scena*, and the actors (labelled *joculatores*) perform in front of him, and are masked; these extra details are probably derived from Trevet or similar sources of 'historical' information.

<sup>29</sup> Text transcribed from Cod.Vat.Lat. 3305, fol. 1v.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. Schmitt, Fig. 17, where the same gesture is used by one of a pair of figures who illustrate the text *Maledicti qui gaudent in rebus pessimis* 'Cursed are those who rejoice in the worst things', from a prayer-book, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2739, fol. 20v, from about 1200; see my Plate 11.

<sup>31</sup> Dodwell, Plates XXI a-b.

<sup>32</sup> Much of the work underlying this paper was done while I was visiting research professor at the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' (March-May, 1991); I would like to express my gratitude to the university, and especially to Professor Teresa Paroli, who generously invited me to Rome. I am also grateful to Professor Romana Zacchi and Dr Laura Bedodi, who arranged for me to consult manuscripts in Bologna and Padua, and to Professor Maria Elena Ruggerini, who has given me much help and support throughout the research for this paper.