

Roman Comedy Five Plays By Plautus And Terence Menaechmi Rudens And Truculentus By Plautus Adelphoe And Eunuchus By Terence Focus Classical Library

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publius terentius afer is better known to us as the roman playwright terence much of his life especially the early part is either unknown or has conflicting sources and accounts his birth date is said to be either 185 bc or a decade earlier 195 bc his place of birth is variously listed as in or near carthage or in greek italy to a woman taken to carthage as a slave it is suggested that he lived in the territory of the libyan tribe that the romans called afri near carthage before being brought to rome as a slave probability suggests that it was there in north africa several decades after the destruction of carthage by the romans in 146 bc at the end of the punic wars that terence spent his early years one reliable fact is that he was sold to p terentius lucanus a roman senator who had him educated and impressed by his literary talents freed him these writing talents were to ensure his legacy as a playwright down through the millennia his comedies partially adapted from greek plays of the late phases of attic comedy were performed for the first time around 170 160 bc all six of the plays he has known to have written have survived indeed thanks to his simple conversational latin which was both entertaining and direct terence s works were heavily used by monasteries and convents during the middle ages and the renaissance scribes often learned latin through the copious copying of terence s texts priests and nuns often learned to speak latin through re enactment of terence s plays although his plays often dealt with pagan material the quality and distinction of his language promoted the copying and preserving of his text by the church this preservation enabled his work to influence a wide spectrum of later western drama when he was 25 or 35 depending on which year of birth you ascribe to terence travelled to greece but never returned it has long been assumed that he died at some point during the journey of his own family nothing is known except that he fathered a daughter and left a small but valuable estate just outside rome his most famous quotation reads homo sum humani nihil a me alienum puto or i am human and i think nothing human is alien to me

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a complex plot of familial misunderstanding

introduces three of terence s most entertaining and widely read plays

the six plays by terence d 159 bc all extant imaginatively reformulate greek new comedy in realistic scenes and refined latin they include phormio a comedy of intrigue and trickery the brothers which explores parental education of sons and the eunuch which presents the most sympathetically drawn courtesan in roman comedy

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the eunuch by terence was apparently the most popular of terence six comedies suetoniuss tells us it commanded a record breaking fee here is a new translation by david bolton together with introductory notes

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