

Playing the Player: Thinking about the *Meretrices* of Plautus' *Truculentus*

1. Lines where *scortum*, *meretrix*, *amica*, *amicus*, or *amator* are used, sorted by character

	Diniarchus	Astaphium	Phronesium	Stratophanes	Strabax	Cyamus	Truculentus
scortum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 • 56 • 62a • 64 • 67 • 69 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 678
meretrix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 226 • 229 • 318 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 854 • 889 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 568 • 572 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 310
amica		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 107 • 171 • 239 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 356 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 496 • 623 • 893 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 914 • 920 		
amicus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 172 • 173 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 216 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 880 • 885 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 574 	
amator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 • 46 • 47 • 135 • 172 • 724 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 166 • 170 • 229 • 231 • 236 • 239 • 241 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 555 	

2. Chart of significant city sackings and hostages taken where known, adapted from Richlin (2015) and Richlin (2017)

Year	Location	Hostages or POWs
217	Hannibal defeats Romans at Lake Trasimenus	Roman POWs in chains
216	Cannae Hannibal sacks Nuceria	Roman POWs not ransomed
215	Roman victories in Sardinia	3,700 prisoners taken
214	Romans take 7 Samnite towns	25,000 captured or killed
214	Romans sack Megara and Henna	
212	Roman sack of Syracuse	
210	Romans take Agrigentum	citizens sold
210	Romans take New Carthage	mass enslavement
209	Romans take Tarentum	30,000 slaves among the spoils
207	Battle of the Metaurus	5,400 Carthaginian POWs
198	Romans sack Dyme	inhabitants enslaved Carthaginian slave revolt at Setia, Norba, Circeii, spreading to Praeneste

All translations are my own.

3. *Truculentus* 14-17

numquam ab amatore [suo] postulat id quod datumst,
sed relicuom dat operam ne sit relicuom,
poscendo atque auferendo, ut mos est mulierum

She never demands from her lover what has been given, but she pays attention to what is left so there isn't anything left, by asking for it or taking it, as is the custom of women.

4. *Truculentus* 35-45

quasi in piscinam rete qui iaculum
parat,
quando abiit rete pessum, adducit lineam;
si inierit rete piscis, ne effugiat cavet:
dum huc dum illuc rete circumvortit, impedit
piscis usque adeo donicum eduxit foras.
itidem si amator id quod oratur
dedit
atque est benignus potius quam frugi bonae
[adduntur noctes, interim ille hamum vorat],
si semel amoris poculum accepit meri
eaeque intra pectus se penetravit potio,
extemplo et ipse periit et res et fides.

Like readying a net for a fishing pool, when the net has sunk all the way down, one pulls the line. If one tosses the net, they make sure no fish escapes. They twist the net back. And forth, snag the fish, all the way up to the point when they bring it out. The same thing if an *amator* has given that which is asked for and is free-giving instead of frugal. Nights are added on. Meanwhile, that one swallows the hook. If he takes a cup of pure love once, and this drink works its way deep within his chest, right away, he himself is ruined – his stuff and his credit too!

5. *Truculentus* 64-69

nam nunc lenonum et scortorum plus est fere,
quam olim muscarum est cum caletur maxime.
nam nusquam alibi si sunt, circum argentarias
scorta <et> lenones qui sedent cottidie,
ea nimia est ratio; quippe qui certo scio,
ibi plus scortorum esse iam quam ponderum.

Now there are nearly more *lenones* and *scorta* than there are flies on an especially hot day. You see, if they are nowhere else, around the banker stall, there is too great an amount of *scorta* and *lenones* who sit there daily. Of course, I'm one who certainly knows this! There there's more *scorta* now than weights.

6. *Truculentus* 95-99

Ad fores auscultate atque adservate aedis,
ne quis adventor gravior abaetat quam adveniat,
neu, qui manus attulerit steriles intro ad nos,
graviditas foras exportet.

Listen at the door and keep watch on the house so some visitor does not head out more loaded up than he came in, or so one who brought barren hands inside to our place doesn't haul pregnant ones out.

7. *Truculentus* 99-103

ita nunc adulescentes morati sunt: quini
aut seni adveniunt ad scorta congerrones;
consulta sunt consilia: quando intro advenerunt,
oenus eorum aliqui osculum amicae usque oggerit, dum
illi agant ceteri cleptae

Now, young men are thus accustomed: they come, five or six at a time to the *scorta*, warmates! Plans have been planned. When they've gotten inside, one of them, whichever one, keeps loading up kisses on his *amica* while the others play the part of thieves.

8. *Truculentus* 171

Quam primum expugnari potis [est], tam id optimum est amicae.

It's so the best for an *amica* that a lover be trounced as soon as possible

9. *Truculentus* 172-173

Ego fateor, sed longe aliter est amicus atque amator: certe hercle quam veterrimus, tam homini optimust amicus.

I admit it, but an *amicus* and an *amator* are really different. Certainly, for cuss' sake, an *amicus* is as really good as he is a very long-term one.

10. *Truculentus* 216

magisque adeo ei consiliarius hic amicust quam auxiliarius.

He's really so much more of an advising friend than a funding source for her.

11. *Truculentus* 217-223

quod habebat nos habemus,
iste id habet quod nos habuimus. humanum facinus
factumst.
actutum fortunae solent mutari, varia vitast:
nos divitem istum meminimus atque iste pauperes
nos:
verterunt sese memoriae; stultus sit qui id miretur.
si eget, necessest nos pati: amavit, aequom ei factum
est.
piaculumst miserere nos hominum rei male gerentum.

What he used to have we have. Your man has what we used to have. That's the way human affairs go. Right away fortunes tend to change. Life is fickle. We remember that guy **was** rich, and he that we **were** poor. The memories have switched. Anyone surprised at this would be a fool. If he's poor, we need to put up with it. He was in love. What happened to him was fair! It's sacrilege if we take pity on men who are in a rough spot financially.

12. *Truculentus* 227-230

meretricem sentis similem esse condecet,
quemquem hominem attigerit, profecto ei aut malum
aut damnum dare.
numquam amatoris meretricem oportet causam
noscere,
quin, ubi nil det, pro infrequente eum mittat militia
domum.

It really is fitting that a *meretrix* be like a prickly bush, snag a man and really cause him some harm or loss. It is never right for a *meretrix* to examine an *amator's* case. Rather, when he gives nothing, she should send him home like an army deserter.

13. *Truculentus* 309-311

Non enim ille meretriculis
munerandis rem coegit, verum parsimonia
duritiaque

You see, that one made his living not by giving gifts to *meretrices*, but by thrift and toughness.

14. *Truculentus* 677-678

novos omnis mores habeo, veteres perdidi.
vel amare possum vel iam scortum ducere.

I have all new ways. Got rid of the old ones. I can either love or take a *scortum*.

15. *Truculentus* 679

Lepide mecastor nuntias.

By golly, you say it charmingly.

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