

Happily Ever After: The Daughters' Marriages in *Trinummus* and *Andria*

Amid its common focus on the *adulescens amans*, Roman Comedy also stages a surprising concern, so far unremarked in scholarship, namely the daughter's happiness in marriage, a happiness dependent upon a good husband. The subject arises briefly in Terence's *Phormio* (759) and *Hecyra* (499-502), but two plays stage it prominently: Plautus' *Trinummus* and Terence's *Andria* feature men heatedly arguing that girls deserve stable, respectful husbands and happy marriages. Strikingly, in *Trinummus* some of these men are not kin to the girl; they insist, regardless, that she must have a dowry to support her and provide her a successful marriage.

Given that Roman Comedy gives no rosy picture of long-term marriages—and these plays show elderly husbands complaining about their wives—the importance of the daughter's happy marriage merits investigation. I argue that *Trinummus* and *Andria* manifest a social concern over a girl's prospects of lifelong happiness. Such concern suggests a widespread social concern for citizen girls, as well as the private family concern identified in Hallett and James.

In *Andria*, Chremes breaks the engagement of his daughter Philumena to Pamphilus, the son of his neighbor Simo. He had sought out Pamphilus, promising a lavish dowry, because the boy was known as respectful and stable. Learning that Pamphilus loved another girl, Chremes ends the arrangement. The marriage would make his daughter miserable, he says (820-41). Angry because Simo hopes the marriage will make Pamphilus grow up, Chremes accuses Simo of putting Philumena in danger (*at istuc periculum in filia fieri gravest*, 566) and using her as a vehicle for the maturing of her unwilling husband: “perpulisti me... filiam ut darem in seditionem atque in incertas nuptias, | eiu' labore atque eiu' dolore gnato ut medicarer tuo” (828-

31). His focus on Philumena's miserable future—quarreling, unstable marriage, pain, suffering—is striking. Scholarship on *Andria* has focused on the father-son relationship (e.g., Goldberg, McGarrity), a common theme in Terence's theater but the father-daughter relationship is at least as important here.

Trinummus has chiefly been studied for its comic value (e.g., Papoiannou, Segal) or its interest in ethics (Anderson, Stein), without attention to the way concern for the daughter of Charmides causes widespread concern. The entire plot is set into motion by concern for her. Observing that his son Lesbonicus has devastated much of the family's estate (*rem confregit*, 108), Charmides predicts dire prospects for his daughter, now old enough to marry. He entrusts her to his friend Callicles, and sets off to make money, leaving 3,000 gold coins for arranging her a worthy match (*dignam condicionem*, 159), if he fails to return.

Four men unrelated to her—Callicles, Megaronides, the *adulescens* Lysiteles, and his father Philto—work to get Charmides' daughter into such a marriage, agreeing that her situation is urgent. Lysiteles, in love with her, persuades his father to let him marry her without a dowry and rescue her from the risky future that he believes is awaiting her. Lesbonicus, belatedly penitent over having put his sister at risk with his extravagance, refuses, arguing that marriage without a dowry would force her into misery, into a marriage that would amount to poverty and concubinage, and would give her just cause to hate him (683). When Callicles hears that Lysiteles plans to marry the girl without a dowry, he is appalled: *flagitium quidem hercle fiet, nisi dos dabitur virgini!* (611). He connives with his friend Megaronides, also appalled at the prospect, to pretend that her father has returned with a large dowry, namely the 3,000 coins he has been hiding for the purpose. (All ends well, of course, when Charmides does return.) Although she never appears on stage and remains nameless, Charmides' daughter is the greatest

concern of the play's characters, because she deserves not a merely respectable marriage but a good one.

This paper argues that *Trinummus* and *Andria* show widespread social concern for the daughter's happiness, not otherwise much attested in Roman sources as a priority for men, as normal.

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