Moore, T.J.


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Awesome in scope and ambition, but mixed in quality. The contents: Preliminaries, i-xvi; Introduction, 1-25; Ch. 1, ‘_Tibiae_ and _Tibicines_’, 26-63; Ch. 2, ‘_Song_’, 64-104; Ch. 3, ‘_Dance_’, 105-34; Ch. 4, ‘Melody and Rhythm’, 135-70; Ch. 5 ‘_Meters_’, 171-209; Ch. 6 ‘Arrangement of Verses & Variation Therein’, 210-36; Ch. 7, ‘_Metrical Structure_’, 237-66; Ch. 8 ‘_Polymetry_’, 267-304; Ch. 9, ‘_Pseudolus_’, 305-51; Ch. 10, ‘_Adelphoe_’, 352-71; ‘Conclusion’, 372-9; Appendix 1, ‘The Meters of Roman Comedy’, 380-4;1 Appendix 2, ‘Meter and Character type’, 385-94; Appendix 3, ‘Metrical Features by Play’, 395-8; Appendix 4, ‘Exceptions to the ABC pattern’, 399-402;2 Appendix 5, ‘Polymetric Passages’, 403-9;3 Works Cited, 410-30;4 Index _locorum_, 431-43; General Index, 444-52.5 Sixty-eight tabulations occupy about 10% of the whole. There are nine illustrations.

The subject was briefly discussed by Beare and by Duckworth;6 Moore adds some good things, but not in proportion to the length of his book. The Introduction on the various possible sources for our knowledge tries to embrace both experts and readers who know nothing about Roman Comedy. Moore typically states why this road or that is blocked, or that that one leads nowhere anyway, but he has not decided which of the two constituencies matters more, and veers unpredictably between them, baffling the one and delaying the other. This is a recurring problem. The topics glanced at here would have been better dealt with as and when needed, if anywhere. The whole of 1-21 should have been pruned or dropped so as to leave Moore’s summary of his book on 22-5 as the only introduction needed.

That said, the first chapter on pipers and the varieties of their pipes is equally accessible to both constituencies and is easily the best in the book. Here Moore draws on archaeological as well as literary evidence for the mouthpieces, the

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1 Naming and counting Questa’s 26 varieties.
2 Moore 253 debatably asserts that in Plautus if _A_ = senarii, _C_ = trochaic septenarii, _B_ = ‘other meters’, then the normal sequence is _ABC_.
4 About 500 entries. Handley’s _The Dyskolos of Menander_, London 1965, 56-73 is missing (Menander’s iambo-trochaics).
5 Skimpy and mechanical. Several entries are useless, e.g. the ones for _diaeresis_ and _palliata_.
reeds, the tubes, their bores, holes, and lengths, and discusses the breathing, the fingering, what each tube does, the noises it could make, the strident buzz of double-reeded pipes which carries well in the open air, reporting the lore of ethnomusicologists and the contributions of several specialist historians of Greek music. Good stuff.

Though he does it well and extensively, translating Plautus and Terence into prose is from Moore’s perspective as a performance-critic inevitably reductive, for in these playwrights’ *fabulae palliatae,* adapted from the repertoire of Greek New Comedy, much is delivered in unaccompanied ‘spoken’ verse (iambic ‘sixers’), but usually still more is ‘sung’ to various musical accompaniment provided by the piper, both in the longer iambic and trochaic ‘seveners’ and ‘eighters’, and in the polymetric *cantica mixtis modis,* ‘songs with mixed measures’, the latter much fewer in Terence than in Plautus, but still there.

The main problem of this music is that it does not survive, except implicitly in the quantitative metric of the dramatists’ verse, which can speak rhythmically, even sometimes as to tempo and (so Moore contends) the ‘beat’, but is silent as to melody, keys, scales, etc. Because both the polymetric and line-by-line passages in the longer iambico-trochaic metres are sometimes referred to as *canticum,* Moore rejects the idea that there might be considerable differences between the kind of vocal delivery with musical accompaniment held appropriate to the one and to the other species and insists (100-3) that the piper’s contributions to the performance of long passages of trochaic ‘seveners’ was no less prominent and ‘melodic’ (whatever that may mean) than in the polymetric passages; they are all just ‘song’. Well, plainsong and jazz are both just ‘music’. A minimalist view would be that in ‘recitative’ the piper provided a discontinuous backing with appropriately placed toots or formulaic phrases marking colon- and line-boundaries, hardly counting as ‘melody’ at all: Moore does not consider that possibility. The iambico-trochaic metres are not isochronous; trochees count three and spondees four time units. The default metre, the trochaic ‘sevener’, may range unpredictably from 23 to 29 time-units. There is only one way each for a line to have 23 time-units or 29, but there are 7 ways each for it to have 24 or 28, 15 ways each for 25 or 27, and 20 ways for 26 time-units; these add up to 64 always unpredictable ways that the next line may be formed, though there is a bias of about 3 to 1 for the longer ways. Whatever ‘melody’ the piper provided, he would have somehow to respect the major

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7 He never uses the name of the genre. Why?
8 The balance in New Comedy had been different. There were no polymetric songs; relatively more was in spoken iambic verse, and correspondingly less in the long iambico-trochaic metres, which were likewise accompanied by a piper.