

**The Brothers Menaechmus** (Plautus, 254-184 B.C.)

Plot Background: Sosicles of Syracuse and Menaechmus of Epidamnus are two twin brothers who have grown up in different cities since being separated by fate at age seven. Sosicles, whose grandfather re-named him Menaechmus in remembrance of his missing twin, has been searching the Mediterranean for years in hopes of finding his long lost brother. His pursuit leads him to Epidamnus, where Menaechmus (I) now resides with his wife (however, he is unfaithful to her, and is having an affair with the next-door neighbor). Unknowingly, Sosicles stumbles onto the very street where his brother lives, and the rest of the play involves the inevitable cases of mistaken identity.

Temporal Setting\*  
(late third century B.C.)

Epidamnus: A large city bordering on the Adriatic Sea. It was once a joint colony of Corcyra and Corinth; whose battle for control of the city was a contributory cause of the Peloponnesian War. In 229, it was occupied by the Romans who used it as a base for their armies in Greece. Because of its location, Epidamnus was a heavily-used port on the sea route from Italy to Greece.

Syracuse: Being ruled by Hieron II (306-215 B.C.), Syracuse was a prospering and magnificent city of Sicily; successful in trade and agriculture. Hieron managed to give it a cultural splendor second only to that of Athens. Under Roman protection and with Hieron's policies, it grew to become the most important city of the Western World after Carthage.

\*Information from the Oxford Classical Dictionary, 2nd. Edition

SCENE

CHARACTERS

\*The Narrator sets the scene.....Prologus

\*Peniculus tries to arrange a free meal.....Peniculus, Menaechmus  
 Menaechmus makes a present to his mistress Erotium  
 of one of his wife's gowns.

\*Interlude Prologus

\*Sosicles is mistaken for Menaechmus by.....Sosicles, Messenio,  
 Erotium, and decides her offer is too Erotium  
 good to refuse.

\*Interlude.....Prologus

\*Sosicles is again mistaken for Menaechmus,.....Sosicles, Menaechmus'  
 this time by his very angry wife--she has .wife, Decio  
 discovered one of her gowns is missing.

\*Interlude..... Prologus

\*Messenio the slave thinks he is seeing double,.....Menaechmus, Messenio,  
 then "cleverly" solves the mystery and reunites .Sosicles  
 the long-lost twins.

\*Finale.....Cast

PLAYERS

Prologus	Leigh Moore
Peniculus	Annie Ellenberger
Menaechmus	Mark Webster
Erotium, the prostitute	Jane Munagian
Cylindrus, the cook in Erotium's house	Ethan Casey
Sosicles of Syracuse, Menaechmus' twin	Jon Shikora (Eric Helling)
Messenio, Sosicles' slave	Michael Allen
Wife of Menaechmus	Tracy Joles
Decio, servant of Menaechmus' wife	Eric Helling (Pat Boyle)
Sosicles' slaves and baggage porters:	
Dan Appel	Nancy Glick
Kate Barta	Cindy Hall
Pat Boyle	Sean McLernon
Joe Gaer	Eileen O'Neill
	Mark Rebholz

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Semester II, 1985-86

History 306

Colloquium on Comedy in the Hellenistic Age

Mr. Clover

SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Discussion Topic</u>	<u>Discussion Leaders</u>
III	Feb. 4	Introduction: What makes people laugh?	Dan Appel, Nancy Glick, Jon Shikora
IV	Feb. 11	(1) Bibliographical orientation for term papers (2) <u>Select term paper topic.</u>	Memorial Library staff
V	Feb. 18	Greek comedy in the Hellenistic Age	Mr. Clover
VI	Feb. 25	An example of the New Comedy: Menander's DYSKOLOS ("Old Crabby")	Michael Allen, Eric Helling, Leigh Moore
VII	March 4	In the footsteps of New Comedy: Roman comedy--an introduction to Plautus	Kathleen Barry, Joseph Gaer
VIII	March 11	Plautus' SWAGGERING SOLDIER	Pat Boyle, Cindy Hall, Sean McLernon
IX	March 18	(1) Plautus' BROTHERS MENAECHEMUS (2) <u>Everyone read one play in * %Plautus: THE POT OF GOLD etc. by this time.</u>	Jane Munagian, Mark Webster
X	April 1	(1) Methods of staging a play of Plautus (2) <u>The first draft of the term paper is due.</u>	Laurie Hoffmann
XI	April 8	Which of Plautus' plays shall we pick?	Everybody
XII	April 15	Workshop	Everybody
XIII	April 22	Workshop	Everybody
XIV	April 29	(1) Workshop (2) Should we perform a scene or two from the play we picked during a class hour?	Everybody
XV	May 6	Dress rehearsal for class-hour production on May 7th or May 9th?	Everybody
	May 14	<u>The second draft of the term paper is due.</u>	

SYMBOLS: \* bookstore purchase      % in H.C. White no. 1191