



# Reading Roman Comedy: Poetics and Playfulness in Plautus and Terence (The W. B. Stanford Memorial Lectures)

*Alison Sharrock*

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For many years the domain of specialists in early Latin, in complex metres, and in the reconstruction of texts, Roman comedy is now established in the mainstream of Classical literary criticism. Where most books stress the original performance as the primary location for the encountering of the plays, this book finds the locus of meaning and appreciation in the activity of a reader, albeit one whose manner of reading necessarily involves the imaginative reconstruction of performance. The texts are treated, and celebrated, as literary devices, with programmatic beginnings, middles, ends, and intertexts. All the extant plays of Plautus and Terence have at least a bit part in this book, which seeks to expose the authors' fabulous artificiality and artifice, while playing along with their differing but interrelated poses of generic humility.

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