

P. Terentius Afer (Terence), *Adelphi: The Brothers*
Henry Thomas Riley, Ed.

(The Comedies of Terence. Henry Thomas Riley. New York. Harper and Brothers. 1874).

TEXT 1

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0112%3Aact%3Dprologue%3Ascene%3D0>

Adelphoe

THE PROLOGUE.

Since the Poet has found that his writings

are carped at by unfair critics, and that his adversaries

represent in a bad light the Play that we are about to perform,

he shall give information about himself; you shall be the judges

whether this ought to be esteemed to his praise or to his discredit.

The *Synapthnescontes*¹ is a Comedy of Diphilus;²

Plautus made it into a Play called the "Commorientes."

In the Greek, there is a young man, who, at the early part of the Play, carries off

a Courtesan from a Procurer; that part Plautus

has entirely left out. This portion he has adopted in the *Adelphi*,

and has transferred it, translated word for word.

This new Play we are about to perform; determine

then whether you think a theft has been committed, or a passage

has been restored to notice which has been passed over in neglect.

For as to what these malevolent persons say, that men of noble rank

assist him, and are always writing in conjunction with him—

that which they deem to be a heavy crimination,

he takes to be the highest praise; since he pleases those

who please you all and the public;

the aid of whom in war, in peace, in private business,³

each one has availed himself of, on his own occasion, without any haughtiness on their part.

Now then, do not expect the plot of the Play;

the old men⁴ who come first will disclose it in part;

a part in the representation they will make known. Do you cause your impartial attention

to increase the industry of the Poet in writing?

1 **Synapothnescontes**: Signifying "persons dying together." The "Commorientes" of Plautus is lost. It has been doubted by some, despite these words of Terence, if Plautus ever did write such a Play.

2 **Of Diphilus**: Diphilus was a Greek Poet, contemporary with Menander.

3 **In war, in peace, in private, business**: According to Donatus, by the words "in bello" Terence is supposed to refer to his friend and patron Scipio; by "in otio" to Furius Publius; and in the words "in negotio" to Laelius, who was famed for his wisdom.

4 **The old men**: This is similar to the words in the Prologue to the *Trinummus* of Plautus, I.16: "But expect nothing about the plot of this Play; the old men who will come hither will disclose the matter to you."