

Donatus' *Commentum Terenti* has been studied with regard to the *scholia* on Terence's language and composing techniques (e.g. Jacobi 1996) and the comments on stage movement and vocal delivery were generally considered as a part of the grammarian's interest in rhetoric, as a part of his students' education (e.g. Basore 1908; Hilger 1970; Blundell 1988). This paper examines representative examples of Donatus' references to the actors' vocal delivery (*pronuntiatio*), facial expressions (*vultus*) and gesticulation (*gestus*) from the two most extant commentaries, the *Commentum Andriae* (marked below as A) and the *Commentum Eunuchi* (E). I argue that, in some instances, Donatus' observations extend beyond the rhetorical scope of his work and illuminate obscure aspects of Terence's theatre. This reconstruction of the stage action contributes to the better understanding of the playwright's techniques.

Donatus often suggests that the understanding of a scene depends upon the actors' nonverbal behaviour. For instance, the delivery has to outline the atmosphere of the scene (E588.6 *Et satis comico caractere locutus est et presso stilo*), indicate emotions (E467.4 *cum invidia pronuntianda sunt*) or bear certain implications (E766.2 *haec omnia sic pronuntianda sunt, ut et iusta et factu facilia demonstrantur*). Donatus comments on the characters' movement, attributing certain gestures to the characters, which might reflect actual stage practices. The commentator also refers to the characters' facial expressions. *Vultus* is an important component of the delivery (A610.1 *vultu ostendit quod subauditur 'nescio'*), used to express the characters' will (E281.1 *supplicantis vultu*).

In the discussion of the above elements, Donatus follows the typical characteristics of a stock role. For instance, he suggests that the comic lovers express their sentiments through certain gesticulation (A310 *'hic' gestu scaenico melius commendatur, nam haec magis spectatoribus quam lectori scripta sunt*; E188.2 *cum pronuntiatione et gestu, ut ostendat quae vis amoris sit*). The commentator also stresses the characters' possible unconventional features, such as a pantomime gesture of an old man – a traditionally severe character – and his happy facial expression. In this context, Donatus' remarks suggest that a character's acting cannot be one-dimensional in a way that does not permit variations on the theme, despite that the movement and appearance of characters in Roman comedy were thought to be stereotyped (Quint. *Inst. Or.* 11.3.112; Cic. *De Or.* 3.220).

More importantly, Donatus' observations constitute comments on the nature of theatre, which is constructed by words and action (Donatus, *De Com.* V.3: *gestu et pronuntiatione consistit*). Given that in the case of Terence's comedy what we possess is the dramatic text, Donatus' commentary is helpful in the understanding of Terence's comedy as an entity, particularly in those cases in which it is evident that Donatus draws his observations from earlier sources that go back to theatrical productions of the plays.