

The *Phasma* of Menander

Eric G. Turner

THE *Phasma* of Menander was the first fragment of this author to be recovered from the Nearer East in the nineteenth century. Theodor Gomperz tells¹ how he was present in the winter of 1867 at a lecture in which Constantin Tischendorf sketched out a plan of a great work on Greek palaeography. It would include all kinds of *inedita* and “nothing made the mouth water so much as the news that there would be about 40 new verses of Menander.” Nine years passed before Tischendorf’s defective copy of these verses was actually published, by the Dutch scholar Cobet.² Cobet tracked down a quotation by Clement of Alexandria embedded in the new verses and therefore was able to confirm the identity of the author. He did realise he had parts of two plays; his allocation of our fragment was to the *Deisidaimon*, as was afterwards Wilamowitz’ to an unknown ‘Pessimist’.³ But both Cobet and Wilamowitz (in spite of the strictures of Kock) made good suggestions about the text. Both were excited about the discovery. Cobet asked that a thorough search be made of the monasteries of Mount Athos by all who happened to go there.⁴ This prayer has been answered generously by fortune. And as it happens some fragments of our play were recovered by Grenfell and Hunt in Oxyrhynchus between 1897 and 1907. But they were not recognised until almost a hundred years after Tischendorf’s lecture. They will be published in *POxy.* Part XXXVIII as no.2825.

The play, we know, was famous in antiquity. In 1938 Professor B. Meritt published a stone from the Athenian agora recording a revival of it in 250 B.C.⁵ Another inscription (*IG II² 2323*) shows that it was revived again in Athens in 167 B.C. This revival might have been the reason why Luscius of Lanuvium chose to adapt it for the Roman

¹ *Hermes* 11 (1876) 507–13.

² *Mnemosyne* n.s. 4 (1876) 285–93.

³ *Hermes* 11 (1876) 498–506.

⁴ “Namque Menandri reliquias etiam tenues et exiles lubentissime accepturi sumus,” *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 293.

⁵ In *Hesperia* 7 (1938) 116.

stage, as we know from the preface to Terence's *Eunuchus*. A mosaic floor in a house at Mitylene shows part of the action, and will be discussed later.

How did a comic poet use the theme of an 'apparition'?—for so I translate the title *Phasma*. 'Ghost' is not correct. The tragedians regularly use the Greek word εἰδωλον for the wraith of a person no longer alive, or even for a wraith that assumes the form of a living person. φάσμα ('apparition') is a more generalised term. It may hint at an epiphany, the occasion when a divine figure (or sometimes a wraith, like that of the dead Achilles in Euripides' *Hecuba*) presents himself to mortal vision; or to presentations made in dreams. On an audience that believed in their reality, an Apparition in a play is likely to have had a startling effect. Darius' ghost did, so did that of Polydorus.

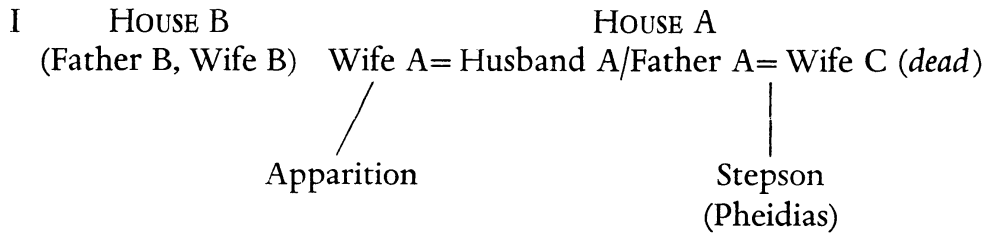
We learn how Menander used the theme from a bare summary of the action given by Donatus (on Ter. *Eun.* 9). Edmonds⁶ translates as follows (somewhat adapted): "The *Apparition* is the title of a play of Menander's in which a young man's stepmother had secretly brought up a daughter she had borne as a result of an affaire.⁷ She was keeping the girl hidden in the house next door and contrived to have her often with her, without the secret being known, in the following way. Cutting a hole through the wall between her husband's house and the neighbour's, she made the entrance to it look like a shrine, and as she screened it with garlands and fresh greenery, could call the girl into her house while at her frequent devotions. When he first saw the mother at worship there, the Young Man was terrified at the sight of a beautiful girl he thought must be a spirit [*velut numinis visu*], which indeed gave the play its name (*Phasma*, apparition). Coming gradually to realise the truth, he fell in love so deeply that there was nothing for it but he must marry her. And so, to the advantage of mother and

⁶ J. M. Edmonds ed., *The Fragments of Attic Comedy* IIIB (Leiden 1961) p.748.

⁷ "A daughter she had borne to a neighbour" is the accepted but wrong version, based on reading Donatus' text as *quam ex uicino quodam conceperat*. If, as must be assumed, the affaire or violation had taken place before the mother's removal to her present ménage (*πρὶν ἐλθεῖν ἐνθάδε*, *Phasma* 11) and marriage, the statement that the girl's father was a neighbour is irrelevant to the present stage setting, and because irrelevant, confusing and likely to be wrong. R. Kassel's brilliant correction of Donatus *quam ex uitio quodam conceperat* removes these difficulties (*ex uicio quōdam* was altered to *ex uiciō quodam* under the influence of the following *cum haberet in latebris apud uicinum proximum*). For the phrase *ex uitio concipere* Kassel compares the Ciceronian *conceptus ex stupris*. It is, of course, predictable that as the play progresses the girl's father will be found to be resident in one of the houses on the stage.

daughter, in fulfilment of the lover's hopes, and with the father's consent, a wedding took place which ends the play."

We may schematize the households:



Since we do not know the girl's name, it may save space to call her 'The Apparition' and her mother 'The Apparition's mother'. Much that we should like to know is omitted. Was the appearance of the Apparition the principal event in the play or simply a mechanism to get it started? Was the hole through the wall shown on the stage? Whose father gave consent to the wedding, the girl's or the bridegroom's? From what we know of Menander, we can be sure that there were more characters and more incidents than figure in this summary.

The Oxyrhynchus fragments, fortunately precisely identified,⁸ add some valuable elements for a dramatic reconstruction.

In fr.A a man and his wife ($\phi\iota\lambda'$] $\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\rho$, 11) discuss a delicate and intimate matter, the festival at which a girl was violated by a man, and presumably bore a child whose paternity is in question. It is not certain that only two characters play the scene, and that the wife is confessing to her husband, but that could be its tenor.

There is in fact a difference in regard to the precise festival at which the incident took place. One witness (a woman who is to be summoned) will say at a festival at Brauron; the husband, at the Adonia (probably), celebrated in Athens. This difference may be an indication, as Professor Garton has suggested to me, that the husband as well as the wife concerned had had a premarital escapade.

In fr.B col.i a cook speaks (17-18, perhaps also 4, 8, 9), a slave Syrus is involved and cursed; and from the interchange we learn that someone 'had a slight touch of melancholia', is now better, and that some-

⁸ The presence of fr.1 (Koerte) was observed by Mr Lobel, of fr.2 by Dr John Rea. I should like also to record the contributions made to elucidation of this new text by Professor E. W. Handley, Professor T. B. L. Webster and Mr W. E. H. Cockle.

one (the same person?) is to 'marry again' (a second marriage, or a marriage which had been put off is now on again).

In col.ii a slave reports to his master (τρόφιμε, 11) on a scene taking place indoors, which it seems that he had spied out. The man spied on, apparently a rival lover (cf. 15), is shamming madness (6, 8, 12). His fit takes the form of kissing a girl all over her face (12-14). The master, who suspects he is being gulled, goes indoors to his sister; his sister herself he expects to be somewhat despondent.

(SLAVE?) "He's no simple Simon." (MASTER?) "My first impressions of him were right; and now . . . Wasn't he at all abashed then?" (SLAVE) "No, he [answered?] and got close to her like a man in his right mind." (MASTER) "I think he has the thing worked out right." (SLAVE) "Then he rushed her again." (MASTER) "Aphrodite isn't lucky for me." (SLAVE) "Why, you are one of the committee that has put captive girl on his menu. The way his illness takes him, he may eat her nose right away." (MASTER) "Heavens, don't say that." "Yes he will, or devour her lips with kisses." "What?" "Perhaps it's for the best, you'll come to a dead stop being in love if you see her like that." "You aren't leading me up the garden path, are you?" "Not I, by Apollo." "I'll go indoors to my sister . . . I fancy she's depressed . . ."

Fr.C seems to be the greeting of the head of one of the stage households, on returning from a journey, to the tutelary statue of Apollo standing by his door.

We may now apply these new factors to what we already possess of the play, given us in Tischendorf's fragments. They were in fact copied from scraps of parchment still in the binding of a book in St Catherine's monastery on Sinai. Later on, Porphyrius Uspensky visited the monastery, dissolved the glue and freed the parchment scraps from their cover. He took them to Russia, and in 1883 they went into the Imperial Library at St Petersburg, as a result of which they are now usually referred to as *membranae Petropolitanae*. In 1891 Victor Jernstedt published a careful account of them⁹ and identified our leaf as part of the *Phasma*. The leaves are now in the Saltikov-Schedrin State Public Library at Leningrad. I have been able to obtain good photographs of them (including the now almost illegible side) and should like to express my gratitude here to the Director of the Library, Dr V. M. Barashenkov, its curator of Mss Madame Granstrem,

⁹ *ActaUPetropol* 26 (1891).

the head of its International Exchange Section Dr I. F. Grigoreva, and to Professor I. Fikman of Leningrad.

The pieces consist of two medium-sized fragments of parchment and a number of scraps. The largest piece contains a part of Menander's *Epitrepontes*, and was definitively anchored in that play by J. Hutloff in 1913.¹⁰ It offers a scene from early in the play, before the Cairo codex begins. The second largest was identified as *Phasma* because of its contents. The identification could (improbably) be wrong. That it is by Menander is guaranteed by its inclusion (vv.50–56 Koerte) of a quotation from Menander by Clement of Alexandria.

On one side the parchment is easily legible, on the other its readings can only be divined from the photographs (specially taken by the Leningrad authorities). As often happens with thin old parchment, the writing on the other side shows through. From the photographs I can make out enough to admire and in general to endorse the work of Jernstedt. The handwriting is a beautiful and regular example of 'Biblical majuscule' to be assigned to the fourth century after Christ. The piece is about 110 mm. in height, containing 27 lines of text. The edge of the page does not survive. What looks like it is seen to be cut (perhaps by the bookbinder's knife) at an angle with the perpendicular formed by the initial letters of the line. It is unlikely that a scribe who wrote handwriting of this size would place more than one column on each page. The two sides therefore are successive: but in what order? How much is missing between them? Since Jernstedt it has generally been accepted that the paedagogus' lecture (vv.26–56) comes later—and this view is reflected in the order in Koerte's edition. I believe this is wrong.

The arguments for the traditional order proceed in two stages: (1) only about 10 lines are missing between the two sides; (2) a transition of 10 lines is insufficient to move from the lecture of vv.26–52 to the supposed prologue of vv.1–25.

The number of missing verses may in fact be more than 10. Codices on papyrus written at this date often hold about 50 verses per page (this is the average in the Bodmer *Samia*, *Dyskolos* and *Aspis*, which is 280 mm. high and was, as I think, written in the IV century). *POxy.* 1236, a fragment of a parchment codex from Oxyrhynchus assigned to the fourth century by its editors Grenfell and Hunt (a date with which

¹⁰ *De Menandri Epitrepontibus* (Diss. Berlin 1913).

I should agree), contains some verses of *Epitrepontes*. It overlaps part of the play contained in the Cairo codex, and can therefore be shown to have contained 43 verses on each page. Its letters are slightly squarer and larger, its lines slightly longer than those in the Petersburg fragments. Grenfell and Hunt give the size of the Oxyrhynchus fragment as 90 × 156 mm.; a photograph supplied by the Cairo Museum, where *POxy. 1236* now is, shows that the lines rise obliquely across this 90 mm. measurement. In fact, the surviving 22 lines of writing would occupy about 105 mm. of the height of the page; the 43 calculated lines would require a page (without margins) to be between 205 and 210 mm. high. In the Petersburg codex 27 surviving lines take up 110 mm. of height. If therefore the page height of Petersburg had originally been about the same as that of *POxy. 1236* it could have held about 50 verses. No margins survive in the Oxyrhynchus fragment, or in that part of the Petersburg fragment which deals with the *Phasma*; but the parts of the Petersburg fragment containing *Epitrepontes* do have good side and upper margins surviving, and the page was clearly originally of ample size. If only the part of *Epitrepontes* contained in Petersburg were also contained in the Cairo codex, or were to turn up from somewhere, the inferences here set out could be tested. But it seems to me to be established that the interval between the two sides in the Petersburg codex does not have to be limited to 10 verses: it may be 20 verses or even more (23 is the allowance if the page holds 50 verses). That being so, we are not bound by the difficulty of a short dramatic transition in choosing which side of the page we wish to put first.

In lines 26–56 (Koerte) a young man Pheidias is being scolded by a privileged family slave (he addresses his master as *τρόφιμε*, line 41); and some have thought him a slave who has gained his freedom. The ends of the verses are missing, but the general connection of thought as shown in Koerte's edition seems acceptable (though I don't think Menander would have ended two successive lines as 38 and 39 end). I translate:

The slave asks, "What is the price of wheat in the market?" (The young man Pheidias has perhaps been ordering the dinner). "What's that to you?" says Pheidias.

(SLAVE)

Nothing, but I thought of using it

As an analogy to make you see the truth.

If they're expensive, let that give you a twinge

On my behalf, a poor man. Pheidias, tell yourself
 That you're a man, and that one who's impoverished
 Is also a man, to prevent yourself from hankering after
 What's above your head. Every time you say
 You haven't slept a wink, you'll know the reason why
 If you review the life you lead. You stroll around the market
 And come home at once if your poor legs are tired.
 You bathe luxuriously, get up again and gorge
 At your pleasure: your very life's a sleep.
 In short, there's nothing wrong with you, suppose
 Your illness is what you've described. Please excuse
 A vulgar phrase, master, that rises on my tongue—
 You've all these bathrooms and you're constipated.

(PHEIDIAS) You'll come to a bad end. (SLAVE) It's true, by heaven!
 That's what your sickness is. (PHEIDIAS) Too true, I'm ill
 and out of sorts, quite unlike myself.

(SLAVE) Illness comes from weakness in the head.

(PHEIDIAS) Well then, you've got this all worked out.
 What advice have you for me? (SLAVE) What advice?
 Listen! If you'd had a real illness, Pheidias,
 You should have looked for a real prescription for it.
 But as you haven't, try a placebo
 For something you haven't got, and fancy it will help you:
 Have the women make a circle round your body,
 Wipe you down, burn brimstone round you,
 Pour on water drawn from three separate wells,
 Mixed with salt and lentils . . .

The slave's sermon may be topical, granted the catastrophic rises in the price of corn in Athens caused by the cornering of the market in the twenties. We note his reference to his master's symptoms, which Pheidias must have told at length¹¹—especially insomnia (mentioned by Galen, *De locis affectis* 3.10 [ed. C. G. Kühn, VIII pp.183 and 193] as an accompaniment of melancholia), and the word 'twinge' or 'irritation', *δακέτω*.¹²

¹¹ ἐσθ' ἦν διήλθεσ v.40, and not necessarily on the stage.

¹² Again used in medical literature, and especially of melancholia: *δακνώδες*, Gal. *Loc.Affect.* 3.10 (VIII, p.188 Kühn); and by Arist. *Eth.Nic.* 1154b11, "Persons of melancholy temperament always need medical treatment. Their body is constantly feeling twinges (*δακνόμενον διατελεῖ*) because of their temperament (*κράσις*)."

What stands on the other side of the page is much more difficult to read, to understand and to restore. In Koerte's (and every other) edition till Del Corno's is presented a completely supplemented text, reflecting the fact that this fragment was one of the earliest pieces of Menander recalled from oblivion, at a time when it was innocently believed that an author's words could be recovered.¹³ We have the second half of the verses, not the first, this time. I particularly doubt whether the first eight lines have been got right, lines 10 and 12 certainly have not; and for the rest I take Koerte simply as a basis for discussion. The 2nd pers. pronoun in v.3 *καυτόν*, v.7 *καυτοῦ*, the prohibition in the 2nd pers. *παραδῶις* v.6, the imperative *οὔτω ποίει* v.7 point either to a dialogue in progress, or else words of another person quoted by the speaker.

By way of example,¹⁴ I translate vv.2–8 in Koerte's text: (2) "... you take a collaborator to bring it off ... (3) [considering] yourself the bridegroom, keep your wits about you ... (4) [don't deprive] a mother of her daughter (5) [by blabbing] this to some other man who has the same mother, (6–7) don't, in heaven's name, give any [grounds for suspicion] against yourself. That's what you must do ... (8) ... this. What else could a man do?" But from v.9 certainly we seem to hear a narrative in monologue:

But she's no apparition, but a real girl . . .

I leave v.10. Koerte's text must be translated, "separated from her mother who is getting married."

¹³ We are still too ready to insert into our texts the first words that come into our heads when the passage is damaged, regardless of whether Menander could ever have written them. When a new text of a restored passage is discovered, we find that he didn't. What was tortuous, awkward and forced becomes straightforward, precise and elegant—above all, dramatically pointed. And his Greek is always felicitous.

¹⁴ V.1 must be ignored. Hutloff puts *Διο]νυσιῶν* at the end of the verse. I cannot see its first *ν*. If the letter were *θ* or *ο*, *θυσιῶν*, *ουσιῶν* would result. Or even, e.g., *δεικ]νός ἰών*. V.2 *ἐπιτελεῖν* could have a ritualistic meaning (cf. p.323). V.3, a quite different syntax can be envisaged, "put yourself on guard against the bridegroom," *φύλαττε πρὸς τὸν νύμφιον καυτόν* (these words themselves are probably too long for the space). V.4, the natural identification of "girl's mother" would be "mother of the bride the bridegroom is to marry." V.5, the difficulty of *ἐτ]έρωι . . . τινὶ* may be evaded, as suggested by Professor Hermann Fränkel, by restoring in some such way as

*οὐ γὰρ κύ γ' ἐτ]έρωι τοῦθ' ὁμομητρίωι τινὶ
λέγοις ἄν' ἀλλὰ] μὴ παραδῶις*

V.8. the idiom is most naturally spoken by a man deliberating on alternatives open to him.

Before she came here, her mother bore this girl
 [This apparition], and gave her to a nurse
 To rear—who keeps her now in the next-door house,
 Brought up in secret and kept under close watch
 When her husband's at home, but at other times,
 When he's abroad and less care is needed,
 She often leaves that house. How does this apparition materialize?
 That's probably the question you all want to ask
 Of me. Her mother has had a hole cut through the wall
 And made a door to let her out—and a room
 From which she can keep an eye on everything.
 The passage is thickly veiled with ribbons
 To prevent a busybody stealing in and discovering
 The secret; and there's an altar also to the goddess . . .

Some part of this narrative is addressed to the spectators (19, *ἔτι ποθεῖτ' ἰσως*), from which it may be inferred that the stage is empty except for the speaker. Some of the restorations gain plausibility from the similarity to Donatus' summary,¹⁵ the *διέξοδος* (v.21: *transitus*), the ribbons (23: *transitum intenderet sertis ac fronde felici*).

Because it is a monologue specifically addressed to the spectators, because it seems to summarize events in the earlier history which the spectator ought to know, and perhaps because of indefiniteness (5 *ἔτ]έρωι τοῦθ' ὁμομητρίωι τινί*), this passage has been taken by almost everyone for a prologue—"spoken by a god," thought Wilamowitz,¹⁶ "for who else could know about the secret of the pierced wall?" Or "spoken by a young man," said Sudhaus, who supposed the young man to be a friend of Pheidias; or by a rival of Pheidias, Koerte's latest view. T. B. L. Webster alone¹⁷ suggested that this might be a monologue spoken when the play is already under way, taking as parallel the soliloquy of Demeas at the opening of the third act of the *Samia*. And he supposed the speaker to be Pheidias.

Let us first pause to look at v.10 (in most restorations, as in Koerte's, the supplement is at least two letters too long). *τῆς γαμουμένης* has without exception been referred to the mother of the Apparition.

¹⁵ We have already abolished v.12 "fathered by a neighbour" (*ἐκ γείτονος*] *ταύτην*), *ex uicino quodam conceperat*.

¹⁶ Menander, *Das Schiedsgericht* (Berlin 1925) p.143 n.1.

¹⁷ Webster, *Studies in Menander* (Manchester 1950) 110.

Those who have paid attention to the form of the Greek word have supposed that she was going to marry again. “Nuptias initura,” says Sudhaus; “the bride-to-be,” Edmonds, adding as comment, “the news must have come later in the play that the husband had perished at sea, leaving the girl’s mother free to marry her neighbour.” This is, of course, a possibility, and I must admit to having been taken in for a time, and to trying to make her the subject of *γαμει πάλιν* in *POxy. fr.B col.i 4, 5*. But this possibility is unlikely to have been raised at an early moment in the play. Moreover, the phrase in participial form *ἡ γαμουμένη* means simply ‘the bride’. So in Menander *fr.581.3–5* (Koerte)

οὐκ ἐξετάζειν μὲν τὰ μηθὲν χρήσιμα,
 τίς ἦν ὁ πάππος ἧς γαμει, τήθη δὲ τίς,
 τὸν δὲ τρόπον αὐτῆς τῆς γαμουμένης,

Don’t ask useless questions,
 Who was the girl’s grandfather, who her nurse,
 But ask about the temperament of the bride herself.

The false trail here lies in the supplement *μητρός*. The new Oxyrhynchus fragments release us from this false trail: a marriage is planned again, or is ‘on’ again. V.10 here will have stated either where the Apparition lived, or her relation to the ‘girl who is to be married’. In the former case

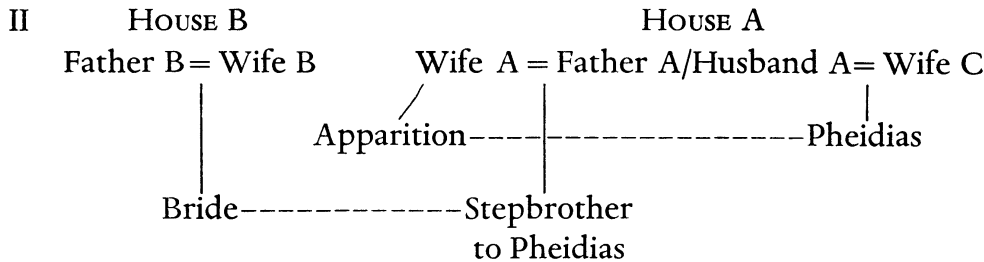
[ἐν οἰκίᾳ τα]χθεῖσα τῆς γαμουμένης¹⁸

Taking up her station in the house of the bride

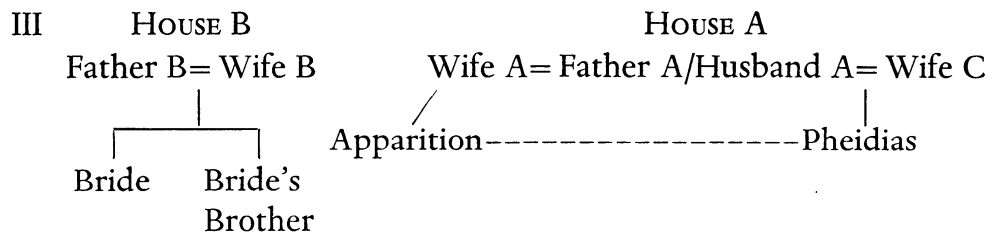
could give us the sense. The new point is that the ‘bride’ in *POxy* lived next door to the house of the Apparition’s mother. In this next-door house, where the Apparition also lives, is a complete household which participates in the working-out of the play. There are two problems in the establishment of these households: who is the bride next-door going to marry, and who is ‘some other man who has the same mother’ (*ὁμομητρίω τινί*, 5 Koerte)? All the older interpreters supposed the latter to be Pheidias’ stepbrother, a son born to the mother of the Apparition after she settled down to respectability and

¹⁸ Short enough. I don’t like *τα]χθεῖσα*, but it could have comic effect. The letter before *θεισα* must be *χ* or *α*.

married. The scheme would look like this, and offer an innocuous pairing off:



But another arrangement is possible: 'some other man who has the same mother' may be a full-brother of the *bride*, and spoken of in this way by a speaker who knows that in that household the Apparition, though passing for a member of the family, is not full-sister of the other children (the speaker might even have a suspicion as to who her father is). Since a secret passage has to have two ends, we might suppose the neighbours, at first childless, were ready to adopt a girl; and then later children of their own were born to them. The scheme now looks like this:



On this view it would be a possible corollary that Pheidias is the bridegroom, pledged to marry the bride in a marriage of convenience. We can escape from schemes II and III by inventing further young men to be rivals, even a whole new household. It is probable that we have not yet enough characters for the play—but we hardly need more young men.

I do not think we yet have enough information to decide between schemes II and III. Under scheme II we know of no special reason why Pheidias should have to beware of a stepbrother—unless that he did not wish to share his girl-friend. No reasons are yet available why the marriage should be off, then on again. If we go further and identify Pheidias with the passionate lover whose behaviour has been spied on

in *POxy.* fr.B col.ii, there seem to be positive objections to this solution. The young man to whom the slave reports is addressed as if he were in love with the rival's girl; and he goes in to see 'his sister', speaking of her as 'depressed', as though she were the bride now to be disappointed by Pheidias.

Yet if we accept scheme III we must suppose that during the course of a day (the normal duration of a Greek comedy) a marriage is both actively prepared, presumably with the consent of the fathers of both households, and that it can be broken off and replaced by a different marriage and leave the families on speaking terms. Some sudden revelation and substitute marriage could of course cause such a change of direction. A marriage is arranged absolutely *ab initio* and celebrated within a very few hours in the *Samia*.

I do, however, feel some confidence in identifying Pheidias, the lover of the Apparition, with the young man who is spied upon in *POxy.* fr.B col.ii. Moreover, I suggest that at the end of the lecture read to him in Petersburg 26-56, he took the advice given him. He went indoors to get his stepmother to arrange a ritual purification for him. While waiting outside the shrine for her, he was suddenly confronted by the Apparition appearing through the wall, and realized she was flesh and blood, and not a phantom. He was cured at once of melancholia; but his tactics are to pretend to a renewal of it, and the need for constant treatment. He spends his time indoors, waiting for the Apparition and kissing her ferociously when she appears.

Galen tells that it was a characteristic of melancholic persons that they entertained *φαντασίαι παρὰ φύσιν*. In a passage¹⁹ to which Professor Phillip de Lacy has directed me, Galen quotes the example of the man who thought he was made of earthenware, and therefore took great care not to collide with passers-by in case he should get broken; of another who watched cocks crowing and spread out his own arms like wings and crowed; of a third who was seized with a fear "lest Atlas who holds up the heavens should get tired, and should then be crushed and involve us all in our ruin." The same point was made much earlier in the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle (1150b25-28, transl. Rackham), "It is the quick and the melancholic persons who are most liable to the impetuous form of *ἀκρασία* (lack of self restraint). The former are too hasty, the latter too vehement to wait for reason,

¹⁹ *De Loc.Affect.* 3.10 (VIII, p.190 Kühn).

because they are prone to follow their imagination (*ἀκολουθητικοὶ εἶναι τῇ φαντασίᾳ*).” It might therefore be not unnatural for people to think a person who claimed to have seen an apparition a melancholic person. I am not saying that the shock turned Pheidias into a melancholic, but that he might be accounted one. This, as I have suggested, is what he thought of himself, as revealed in the slave’s lecture; and is the condition he continued to exploit later on. In imposing method on his madness he prefigures Hamlet.

It now becomes clear where my argument is leading. The Apparition, I am suggesting, is a device to allow a free-born young man and a free-born girl to meet each other and fall in love, it is not a major event led up to by all that happens in the play. It is not easy in a society where women are closely guarded for young men and girls to meet each other. We all know that Athenians took very good care of their womenfolk, as they still do. The comic dramatist is constantly on the lookout for new techniques of introducing them to each other. Moreover, to utilize the Apparition idea like this would be Menander’s way. We might think that he would not, by blurting it out at the start, squander so promising a theme as that a ghost is not a ghost—we mean that we would not. His comedies take a certain situation as base, and then explore and finally resolve its resultant complexities. The audience is constantly kept guessing, just as a modern audience is kept guessing by the writer of a whodunnit. But the Greek audience were guessing about means of resolution within their experience. Just as the original situation was always a possible one (not an impossible one, as in a farce),²⁰ so the way out must follow the conventions of ordinary society.

When Menander was a child there was a scandal involving a secret passage which caused some stir. In the year 333 B.C. Lycophron was accused of conducting an affair with a lady next door through just such a hole in the wall as Menander uses. The trial was quite an event: Lycurgus appeared for the prosecution, Hyperides for the defence (*POxy.* 1607).

Pheidias and his girl-friend are unlikely to have had long to enjoy paradise. In the *Oxyrhynchus* fr.B col.ii a rival (perhaps the half-brother, as we have seen) sets a household slave to spy on them and

²⁰ An exception must now be made (as far as we can see from the fragments so far published) in regard to the *Aspis*. The pretended death scene looks like pure Feydeau.

report. And it seems that in Act II of the play their idyll was interrupted by discovery. One of the mosaics from the house in Mitylene which contained scenes from Menander shows an episode from this play. This mosaic (*BCH* 88 [1964] 802), not one of those in the main dining-room, gives no names alongside the three characters shown. But it is headed Φ ACMATOC ME B, *Phasma* Act 2. At the left, outlined by a dark border, is a doorway in a wall. The folding doors open inwards into the room from which a young girl is emerging. At the right is a figure wearing a white tunic covered by a dark red cloak.²¹ In the centre wearing an old man's mask, dressed in gold, hourglass panels on the lower part of his himation, is a burly elderly figure. His dress and stance (especially the staff and the hourglass panels) are those of father-figures—such as Smikrines in the *Epitrepontes*, Demeas in the *Samia*. He has the air of having caught the other two unawares. We recollect that in *POxy.* 2825 someone salutes 'neighbour Apollo' as if he were a head of a family returning from absence. Perhaps this is he.

That it is a discovery scene hardly admits of doubt. But the figure on the right is not certainly identified. Mme Kahil interprets it as a young man, but with some hesitation: the bright pink face does not well suit the whiteness required of the 'effeminate young man' ($\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\lambda\acute{o}\varsigma$ νεανίκοσ) of Pollux's list, and there seems to be a wreath across the brow which might well suit a woman. If it is a woman, it must surely be the Apparition's mother, surprised by an unexpected return of her husband into a betrayal of her daughter's presence. If it is a young man, it will be the father's son Pheidias, caught alone with his girl. It cannot be the first moment that the Apparition came through the wall. Had Pheidias had a companion when he thought it was an apparition, he would not have been so terrified, and his companion would have spoken out. It can hardly be the moment at which for the first time Pheidias discovered the humanity of the Apparition—unless the central figure could be taken for a confidant, the slave, for instance, who had lectured Pheidias. No one could look less like a household slave or a confidant than the figure in the mosaic.

This scene took place in Act II. The moment of discovery, whether of mother or lover, came early in the play. We have grown used in

²¹ I owe the description of the colouring to Mme Lilli Kahil, who has shown me the manuscript of her publication of the Mitylene mosaics.

the last few years to the principle that a Menandrian comedy was divided into five acts. Surely this is proof that the Apparition motif is not a main event in the play, but the situation assumed as starting point.

If so, then what once seemed to me a serious obstacle to regarding Petersburg *Phasma* 9–25 as a prologue to the comedy (namely that it would blurt out the whole secret) no longer holds. Moreover, these verses cannot now be a monologue announcing discovery of the Apparition's reality at the opening of Act III; they are not parallel to the monologue of Demeas in the *Samia* Act III. They could perhaps be such a monologue at the beginning of Act II. But I think that re-examination will show that they must be a prologue, spoken by a semi-divine figure. For the information which we are given is both too categorical and too vague for any character in the play to retell to the audience as his own discovery. Were it Pheidias speaking of the human character of the Apparition, then how does he know that "before she came here, her mother bore this girl" (v.11).²² Did the Apparition tell him this family history? This precise knowledge is the exact opposite of Demeas' ignorance in his monologue in Act III of the *Samia*, for Demeas tells in vivid detail of what he heard, and has no certain knowledge of exactly what it portends. And should we not expect Pheidias to give names?—It is, after all, of his stepmother and his neighbours he is speaking. But prologue figures quite deliberately do not overburden their recitals with names. And why the historic presents—of which *δίδωσι τ' ἐκτρέφειν* is a certain instance? These are exactly to be paralleled in the recitation of the divine figure Ignorance in *Perikeiromene* (e.g. 10, *δίδωσι τὴν κόρην ὡς θυγατέρα*). Coupled with this recital of events of the past which have left behind a deposit to affect the present is a description of present dramatic necessities, "how the girl materializes." These considerations convince me that we must return to the older view (the view of Wilamowitz), that what is given us here is an outline of what we need to know in order to understand the action: a knowledge not available to any of the human participants at this point in the play, and no more than the bare necessity for us. In the *Aspis* similar knowledge is given us by Tyche, Fortune, acting as prologue figure: we are assured that the mourned soldier, whose property is coveted by his greedy uncle,

²² Whatever the supplements, the question holds.

is not dead but a prisoner of war and "will survive as never before."

We may now pick up another of our questions: Was the passage through the wall part of the staging? Did the audience see it as the artist of the Mytilene mosaic has presented it? We know that the staging of internal scenes was likely to offer great difficulties to a Greek theatrical producer. Normally the theatre front represented a street; its two or three doors were the front-doors of houses giving onto the street. While it might be possible to see directly inside, as some have thought we do in the famous Dioscurides mosaic (*Κυναριστῶσαι*),²³ it would be difficult to see an internal party-wall full-face.²⁴ The fact that this passage through the wall is described for us in detail in a prologue and the fact that the love-making of Pheidias and the Apparition is presented through the words of a servant playing gooseberry suggest that no attempt was made. It was up to the dramatist's verbal ingenuity to get round this obstacle; and in *POxy.* fr.B ii he does it with such ingenuity that it almost escapes notice that a stroke of technique is involved. One constant feature of New Comedy and its Roman imitators that seems to us so artificial is hereby explained. To use slaves as spies and to pass on communications through them is a way of presenting what cannot go on in the street. The scene portrayed therefore on the Mytilene mosaic did not happen like that on the stage. It also must have been presented in words, whether monologue or dialogue. We must not be misled by the fact that the artist of the mosaic has translated the action into visual terms. But the fact that he has done so is of interest for all dramatic illustrations in the ancient world.

It is time to offer a rough scenario of the play. It may have opened

²³ The same scene is shown in inversion in the Mytilene mosaics. In *Greek Theatre Production* (London 1956) 24, T. B. L. Webster wrote: "the scene plays before or in one of the two side houses."

²⁴ Doors placed between two lines of stage-characters are shown in several of the illustrated MSS of Terence. It seems as though the miniaturist has attempted to show visually and simultaneously what is taking place indoors and outdoors. See, e.g., L. Webber-Jones, C. R. Morey, *The Miniatures of MSS of Terence Prior to the Thirteenth Century* II (Princeton n.d. [1931]) at *Adelphi* 376 and *Andria* 465. In the former, Syrus calls through the door to the cook to let the eel swim in a bowl for a short while: the miniature shows Syrus outside, the cook inside watching the eel swimming in a bowl.

I must admit that Mme Kahil does not agree with me, and in her publication of the Mytilene mosaics in *Antike Kunst* will present the case for regarding the scene on the mosaic of *Phasma* as what passed on the stage.

with a dialogue between slaves of the stepmother's household, and we learn that a wedding breakfast is in course of preparation. The wedding is—well, shall we say—between Pheidias and the daughter of the house next door? But Pheidias is not well. He then walks in himself; he has been describing how he had seen an Apparition, and it has given him a shock. The slave scouts his fancies (this is Petersburg *recto*, 26–56), and recommends him to get the womenfolk to exorcise him.

Pheidias sees his mother and asks her to act so. The first few lines of Petersburg *verso* are part of her reply.²⁵ ἐπιτελεῖν (v.2) may mean 'bring to a happy ending'. But it is a technical term of ritual. His stepmother, in fact, is concerned at this talk of a ghost and fears discovery; so, lest the girl reappear and the news reach the lady next door and this lady's true daughter and son, she enjoins the utmost discretion on him. Both go indoors after v.9 (which we must restore differently), and the Divine Prologue figure tells us that in fact the ghost is a girl, her history, and how she comes out. The prologue must also tell us who the neighbours are, and what sort of ménage they keep, and who is the priestess' own husband.

The admonitions to secrecy have, of course, been useless. In what is left of Act I Pheidias discovers the truth, in Act II he makes use of his opportunities and gives cause for suspicion. And the secret of the concealed girl is discovered.

But there is still much to happen, and the order in which it happens will depend on the precise discovery made in Act II—lovers surprised together, or mother and daughter found together. In any case the husband will suspect his wife. The irate husband must now have an explanation about the girl next door. He begins to suspect his wife. Perhaps he chases her out, and she takes refuge with the neighbours, as in the *Samia*. The neighbour in Act IV perhaps resents suspicion cast on him, as if he were the father of the girl, and there could be a fine imbroglio. During the excitement some keepsakes retained by the Apparition's mother are discovered, and they, together with the help of the memory of a nurse, give a clue to the Apparition's paternity.

Here we may choose between two possibilities. If the erring father is also the present husband (*i.e.* Father A is also father of the girl), then

²⁵ That up to v.9 they should be regarded as dialogue was suggested by F. G. Allinson in his Loeb edition of 1921.

there is every reason why he should forgive his wife, she him, and the neighbours be completely cleared. Perhaps this is why in Donatus' summary, the last sentence runs "to the advantage of mother and daughter, in fulfilment of the lover's hopes, and with the consent of the father (*consensuque patris*), a wedding took place." In Athenian law you could marry your half-sister, provided she was half-sister on the father's side (*δμοπάτριος*) not the mother's (*δμομήτριος*).²⁶

But this is not the only possible paternity. If the tiny scrap of dialogue in the new papyrus reported on page 309 above between a husband and a wife is rightly taken to hint that the husband as well as the wife had been involved in premarital adventures, it would be quite possible for Pheidias and the Apparition not to be related. The father of the Apparition might be Husband/Father B, the head of the household into which the Apparition was adopted. His being literally *vicinus* might explain the corruption in Donatus' text. Yet it might also be possible for Pheidias' mother to be Wife B. In that case, Pheidias and the bride might be discovered to be full-brother and sister and therefore unable to marry; and that might be a reason why the fathers agreed to the marriage being switched. The plain fact is that we do not yet know. A hundred damaged verses out of a total of a thousand or so, coming early in the action, are inadequate to circumscribe the ingenuity of incident that might be imagined by the Menander whose aims and methods I have tried to elicit.

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²⁶ Plut. *Them.* 32 (speaking of a daughter of Themistocles): Ἀρχέπολις ὁ ἀδελφὸς οὐκ ὦν ὁμομήτριος ἔγημεν. [Andoc.] 4.33: Cimon. Dem. 57.20: ἀδελφὴν γὰρ ὁ πάππος οὐμὸς ἔγημεν οὐχ ὁμομητρίαν. Cf. Ar. *Nub.* 1372.