

A Script for a Sixth-Century Mime (*P.Oxy.* LXXIX 5189)

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THE PAPYRUS *P.Oxy.* LXXIX 5189 is a sixth-century CE fragment of a mime that showcases obscenity, slapstick, and surprisingly rich characterization of an elderly female figure.¹ The scene is written on both recto and verso, with many abbreviations and late spellings. It is nevertheless possible to discern the stage action with considerable clarity. Unusually for the *editio princeps* of an Oxyrhynchus papyrus, no initial translation was provided. The reasons for this will soon become evident, and this can be remedied. Nevertheless, since our discussion leads to some conclusions that differ from those of Peter Parsons, the papyrus's editor, it is important for us to develop them in discrete steps.

Our discussion begins with a detailed consideration of the stage directions presented in this mime script. The scene requires at least five performers, who are identified with algebraic markings,² and many of their actions are indicated with stage directions. The second section looks at the spoken dialogue, and shows how verbal repetition begins to offer an outline of the overall scene. The third section explains how we discern certain

¹ Edited and with commentary by P. J. Parsons (2014). The text is reproduced in the Appendix below, together with our working translation. In citing the papyrus we maintain Parson's diplomatic forms, except when that risks confusion. Other papyrus fragments of mime, in addition to Herodas, are in I. C. Cunningham, *Herodae Mimiambi* (Leipzig 2004).

² Similar algebraic character notations in mimes are in *P.Oxy.* III 413, *P.Varsov.* 2, P.Berol.inv. 13876 (= fr.6, 7, 11, 12 Cunningham), and *P.Oxy.* LIX 5188.

distinct characters emerging in the text, and the implications this has for the larger narrative. In the fourth section we revise our overall appreciation of the narrative, before concluding with some larger questions about what the papyrus might reveal about mime performance generally.

Much is uncertain about mime, a shadowy genre of street performance that could be in prose, verse, or a mix of both (making it prosimetric).³ Nevertheless, a few general claims can provide a likely (if not certain) context for understanding this papyrus:

- (1) Mime was performed unmasked and could include female performers.⁴
- (2) Mime presents a kind of naturalism not found on the earlier stage.⁵ It is typically assumed that female actors played female characters.
- (3) Though mime was regularly part of the celebration of the Floralia and could be performed in theatres well into the Empire (e.g. Apul. *Flor.* 5 *in theatro si mimus est, riseris*, “If there is a mime in the theatre, you will laugh”), the genre was equally at home in an informal or private venue. As a result, the conventions of the stage space in mime performances are fluid and

³ Important early surveys of mime include H. Reich, *Der Mimus* I–II (Berlin 1903); E. Wüst “Mimos,” *RE* 15 (1932) 1727–1764; M. Bonaria, *Mimorum Romanorum Fragmenta* I–II (Genoa 1955); and H. Wiemken, *Der griechische Mimus* (Bremen 1972). These have not been fully superseded, though see S. Tsitsiridis, “Greek Mime in the Roman Empire (P.Oxy. 413: *Charition* and *Moicheutria*),” *Logeion* 1 (2011) 184–232, and L. Cicu, *Il mimo teatrale greco-romano: Lo spettacolo ritrovato* (Rome 2012).

⁴ Famous female mime actors in antiquity include Cytheris Volumnia, a lover of Mark Antony, and Theodora, wife of Justinian. Female mime actors were so common by late antiquity that they figure heavily in Imperial legislation and in the polemics of such Christian writers as John Chrysostom. See R. Webb, “Female Entertainers in Late Antiquity,” in P. Easterling et al. (eds.), *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession* (Cambridge 2002) 304–326.

⁵ An anonymous quotation in the grammarian Diomedes describes mime as a μίμησις βίου, “an imitation of life”: Keil, *Gramm. Lat.* I 491. One of the terms for a mime actor was βιολόγος: L. Robert, “ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΟΣ,” *REG* 49 (1936) 235–254, at 238–241.

uncertain.

(4) Mime scripts are more liberal with the representation of music and sound effects (due in part to the performance requirements for precise timing).⁶

(5) Evidence from diverse sources points to the existence of mime troupes, led by an individual (the *archimimus* or *archimima*) and working with several others, who might be slaves.⁷

1. *Stage directions*

P. Oxy. 5189 stands out among dramatic scripts as it contains a means of indicating stage directions that has not been found in previously known dramatic texts from antiquity. The short scene provides roughly twenty stage directions, and this allows a clear sense of how the author conceived the rapid dramatic action progressing. Stage directions were, for the most part, not part of Greek dramatic texts, and while there are a handful of exceptions, stage directions are found to a greater extent in papyri that contain mime. Revermann emphasizes that none of the apparent stage directions in scripts of comedies provide information that cannot readily be deduced from the lines the actors themselves speak.⁸ This papyrus differs significantly from this pattern. The script employs an algebraic notation to indicate the characters: these are **A** through **E**, signaled by a line positioned over the letter.⁹ There is a sixth character (with a superpositioned line at ^v18) identified as an ἄκαίρος (lit. “the inopportune one,” like the Latin *molestus*, who always arrives at the wrong time; here we translate this more colloquially as “the Jerk”). Theophrastus’

⁶ *P. Oxy.* 413 recto (fr.6 Cunningham), for example, indicates when cymbals and drums should be played: see Tsitsiridis, *Logeion* 1 (2011) 188 with references in n.13.

⁷ Inscriptions are a particularly useful source for mime troupes in the Imperial period (e.g. *CIL* VI 1064 [*ILS* 2179], a roster of mime actors performing at a military festival ca. 212).

⁸ M. Revermann, *Comic Business: Theatricality, Dramatic Technique and Performance Contexts of Aristophanic Comedy* (Oxford 2006) 320–325.

⁹ We use boldface to designate the algebraic identification of speakers, instead of a capital with a superpositioned bar, i.e. **A** for \bar{A} .

Characters 12 describes the type of individual with this trait, giving many examples of untimely behaviour:¹⁰

The Tactless Man [ὁ ἄκαιορος] is the kind who comes for a discussion when you are busy. He serenades his girlfriend when she is feverish. He approaches a man who has just forfeited a security deposit and asks him to stand bail. He arrives to give evidence after a case is closed. As a guest at a wedding he delivers a tirade against the female sex...

It is not immediately clear why the ἄκαιορος is not given an algebraic letter as are the other characters, a question to which we return in section 4. It is, however, possible to observe the following: the recto contains speeches by characters **A**, **B**, and **Δ**; the verso has speeches by **B**, **Γ**, **Δ**, **E**, and the ἄκαιορος. This sequence immediately suggests the following:

- (1) There is an initial temptation to assume that letters reflect the order of speaking, and do not refer to any priority among the performers. For example, nothing in the script distinguishes the *archimimus*/*archimima* from other performers, unless this is the ἄκαιορος.
- (2) If so, the material on the recto precedes the material on the verso in the performance (this is the conclusion we will reach anyway, in section 2, but it is salutary to have corroboration from the character notations).¹¹
- (3) It follows from this that the **Γ** character will have come on stage and spoken before the material on the recto and will have already departed, part of the many comings and goings in this short script.

It is not clear whether this algebraic notation indicates the character or the actor. If the former, it may be that a given actor played more than one dramatic role: it may be that the ἄκαιορος is a second character played by a previously-appearing actor. The mime texts that employ similar notation do not decide the

¹⁰ Text and translation: J. Diggle, *Theophrastus: Characters* (Cambridge 2004) 103, and see 321–326.

¹¹ Parsons 28: “[w]e have no physical evidence for the order of the two sides” of the papyrus.

matter one way or another.¹²

The first stage directions in the script are indicated with a genitive absolute, denoting accompanying action by another character:

^r21–22 ... **A** τρώγοντος το(ῦ) **B** θέλις
 κῦρ[ι]...
 A (*with B chewing*) Boss, do you want ...?

Though a character notation appears immediately before the first word spoken, the presence of the genitive article means that **θέλις** (and the words at the beginning of the next line, ^r22) is spoken by **A**. Similar stage directions, with the order of the genitives reversed, are also found:

^r27 ... το(ῦ) **B** κοσσίζωντο(ς)
 (*with B punching* [sc. him/her])
^r28 ... το(ῦ) **A** ἐξερχ(ομένου)
 (*with A exiting*)

In both these examples, the algebraic notation uses the definite article, but this is not always so:

^r20 ... καὶ **Δ** ἐξερχ(ομένου)
 (*and with Δ exiting*)

This same pattern is also found on the other side of the papyrus (though the character exiting cannot be identified at the end of line ^v15):

^v16 το(ῦ) εἰσερχομ(ένου)
 (*with [him] entering*)

(See also lines ^r18, 21, 22, 23, cited below; there is no consistency concerning how many letters are omitted in a given abbreviation).

This pattern assumes more elaborate forms on the verso. The first example, of simultaneous paired action, involves **B** and the ἄκαίρος:

¹² Several MSS. of Menander and of Roman comedy employ similar algebraic notation, discussed by E. J. Jory “‘Algebraic’ Notation in Dramatic Texts,” *BICS* 10 (1963) 65–78.

Compare:

^r14] **A** κολλῶντος
 (with *A* joining *him*)¹⁵

The precise meaning of κολλῶν is not guaranteed, but “stand beside” seems more likely than anything else, given the verb’s use later:¹⁶

^v29 ... το[ῦ] **B** ἔξωθεν κολλῶντος αὐτ[
 ... (with **B**, *apart*, joining [*him*])¹⁷

We suggest that ἔξωθεν is to be understood as “apart” (i.e. in a split-focus scene, where a character is in a notional second space, perhaps eavesdropping), rather than simply “outside” or “from offstage.” This makes most sense of the only other time the word is used:

^v16–17 τοῦ **B** ἔξωθεν καὶ **E** ἀναποδ[ι-
 ζόντων καὶ λεγόντων αἴτος αἴτος αἴτος
 (with **B** *apart* and **E** [*both*] *making* [*him*] *step back and saying*) Don’t
 fall! Don’t fall! Don’t fall!

The plural genitives indicate that both **B** and **E** are shouting what the papyrus gives as αἴτος. As a philosophical term, ἀπτός means “tangible,” and while one can conceive of a sense that could be applicable (the character is mistaken for an apparition, as in Menander’s *Phasma*), we do not believe that that is the meaning here. Instead, ἀπτώς is meant. Parsons (38) understands this to mean “caught” (as in apprehended). If this is so, given that the stage direction that follows features the ἄκαιρος, he is the best candidate for whom **B** and **E**, standing on either side of him, have caught. As they grab him (ἀναποδίζω might merely be calling him back without physical restraint or blocking

¹⁵ It is possible that the article τοῦ has been lost immediately before this. An abbreviation is used elsewhere in the papyrus that occupies only a single letter space (Parsons 32).

¹⁶ κολλάω carries a general sense of joining two items together, but its use here with character notations, especially in contrast to the use of ἔξωθεν, must indicate movement onstage.

¹⁷ Parsons 40 rightly notes the last word is likely αὐτ[ῶ] on analogy with ^v15.

an erect or possibly circumcised penis,²¹ and is found again later:

^v24–25 Δ εἰπέ, πόρνη ψωλοφάγε, διὰ τί καλῶς ἔψησας;

αὐ̄ αὐ̄, διὰ τί κακῶς ἔψησας; το(-) κό(σσ-)

Δ Tell me, you Cock-munching whore, why do you boil it well? Ow! Ow! Why do you boil it badly? (*with punches*)²²

The second-person verbs in these passages (^r24, ^v7, 9, 10, and 24) are not, in our view, stage directions. Stage directions identified so far have used nominative participles, genitive absolutes, and third-person indicative verbs. To add second-person imperatives to the ‘vocabulary’ of stage directions (as in Parson’s interpretation) proves to be limiting in two ways. First, it changes the presumptive nature of a stage instruction from indicating an actor’s performance to something else. This will be considered later in this section. Second, it removes substantial meaning from the emergent plot of the mime. This is, admittedly, potentially circular, in that our interpretation of a coherent plot exists only when the imperatives are understood as spoken dialogue and not as yet another form of stage direction. The coherence of this plot, however, is what prevents any recursiveness: the emergent narrative explains additional features of the text that otherwise remain incoherent.

This threefold repetition is crucial for our interpretation of the plot of the mime. As is clear from the final passage, Δ speaks the lines he has been told to speak in ^v9–10, but instead of complaining that someone has prepared the food poorly, as instructed, he mistakenly says the food he has tasted was prepared well. This leads to his exclamation and self-correction, as he then gets the line right. “Repetition plays an important role in the creation of comic effect”: Tsitsiridis’ observation, made about *P.Oxy.* 413

²¹ ψωλός refers to a penis with the foreskin drawn back or removed. On the metaphor of eating for oral sex see J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore 1982) 138–141.

²² It is conceivable that instead of εἰπέ (second-person imperative) εἶπε (third-person indicative) is meant (i.e. Δ says, You cock-munching whore...), as in ^v22. There the verb is part of a larger stage direction. Here it apparently is not, and so is more likely part of the direct speech.

recto (the *Charition* mime, fr.6 Cunningham), is equally true here. Indeed, the repetition allows for additional humour as the character almost gets his line right: it is in the small variation that the humour emerges.²³ If this interpretation is sound, this means that **Δ** was the addressee of $\nu 7$ –10, and, given that those instructions included the order that **Δ** punch—or perhaps pretend to punch—the speaker ($\nu 10$, as **Δ** pretends to be upset), we can infer that the speaker of $\nu 7$ –10 is female. Earlier, someone is told:

$\tau 17$ καὶ ἀγόρασόν σοι μαγίρ[
...and hire yourself a cook.

The *mageiros* is almost certainly mentioned again ($\nu 29$ γίρον) and should therefore be one of the characters onstage. Since the cook has not been hired at $\tau 17$, he must be a character not yet onstage, which is to say the cook is either **E** or the ἄκαιρος. As the sex of the cook is not yet known within the world of the mime (and would normally be assumed to be male), the cook cannot be the woman addressed in $\nu 7$ –10. The only character therefore who can be addressed in this way is **B**, and that means that **B** is the μοι in $\nu 10$ δίδις μ[οι] δύο κό(σσοις).

We therefore conclude that **B** is the female character. As this differs from Parsons' conclusion (28) that **A**, **B**, and **E** are male, it is necessary to pause and consider his evidence, which is based on the use of the vocative κῦρι, “boss” (we use this informal colloquialism, channelling Chico Marx, to avoid the stiltedness of “my lord” or the formality of “sir”).²⁴ The term κῦρι is used five times in the extant script, from **B** to **A** ($\tau 15$, $\tau 23$), from **Δ** to **E** ($\nu 22$), by **A** in $\tau 22$, and by an unknown speaker in

²³ Tsitsiridis, *Logeion* 1 (2011) 217. Additionally, it is worth noting that *P. Oxy.* 413 recto lines 30–57 are repeated more elaborately in verso lines 107–149 (Tsitsiridis 146). The significance of this repetition in the dramaturgy of that script requires more attention than can be given to it here.

²⁴ E. Dickey, “The Ancient Greek Address System and Some Proposed Sociolinguistic Universals,” *Language in Society* 26 (1997) 1–13, at 11, traces the introduction of κύριε as a form of address in the first century CE, where “*kúrie* seems never to have been a more polite alternative to *déspota*; sometimes the two terms are interchangeable, but usually a difference can be detected, and then *kúrie* is always the LESS respectful address” (emphasis in original).

11. In the case of 22, Parsons takes the addressee as **B** (who is chewing loudly), but **B** is not the only other character on stage. While **A** was “exiting” at 20, his departure is not immediate, which we can tell because he speaks 21, asking a question. Having begun to exit, he waits for the answer which begins in 22 with κῶρι, and then departs. The stage direction is positioned at the beginning of the action, but the scene does not stop while **A** exits. **A** therefore addresses **A** at 22. From this a clear hierarchy emerges between characters: **B** is deferential to **A** (15, 23), in some sense, **A** to **A** (22), and **A** to **E** (22). Further, we can confidently claim that **A**, **A**, and **E** are male. Note that the use of this term does not guarantee relative social position: showing deference can be due e.g. to the sex of the speaker, to social inequality, to guests, to strangers, or to those from whom one wants something. The precise nature of this emergent hierarchy will become clearer in section 3. Finally, this does (we feel) allow for a possible inference about the speaker of 11, if we assume that the term is used consistently:] στε εἶπω κυρ [] υ, “When I say ‘boss’...” At this point, apparently, **A**, **B**, and **A** are on stage, and someone is explaining their use of the term, which is in some sense non-standard. There are three possibilities wherein a male character could be addressed:

- (1) **B** or **A** could be addressing **A**. Given that **B** is female and both are slaves, this should not need particular explanation.
- (2) **B** could be addressing **A**, her fellow slave. Again her sex means that that this is not a surprise.
- (3) This leaves the possibility of **A** addressing **A**. One reason why this might deserve comment is if it were being used in a context where one would expect the deference to be in the other direction. Below we will suggest that **A** is free while **A** is a slave, and that the deference is being shown by the guest who is seeking sustenance.

We conclude that 11 is an explanation by **A** for a previous use of the term.

The three passages introduce details of the mime’s plot that clearly merited repetition. A scheme of some sort is being enacted: it is conceived (24–26), implemented (7–10), and then performed (24–25). But it is complex, and the repetition helps

overall slapstick that is evident from the stage directions. Character **A** has instead been eating, and evidently is doing so vulgarly (^v21 τρώγοντος ἐξήχως). Given this and the presence of a specially-procured cook, this appears to be a kind of banquet scene, likely in its preliminary stages. As is evident from a stage direction not yet considered, however, the food after hiring the cook is different from what had been offered initially. Previously, things had not been going well:

^r16 **A** πτύοντο[ς] φοῦ ἐνόσησεν
 (with **A** *spitting*) Phew! He is sick.

This is not character **A** speaking, but a continuation of the previous speaker, who is almost certainly **B**, who began on ^r15 with νὲ κύρ[ι] (“Yes, boss...”). The language seems to be combining a traditional culinary scene-gone-wrong with violent abuse. The reference in ^r20 to τὸ φακιάλιν μου (“my napkin”) corroborates the culinary theme, and supports the identification of the speaker (**A**) as a parasite.

A tentative sequence of events therefore emerges: unexpected guests arrive and the food available is inadequate; slaves concoct a deception which involves hiring a cook, but still pretend that the food is inedible; the scheme goes awry because one slave enjoys the taste of the food so much, and needs to be beaten to remember to pretend otherwise. A second complication is the ἄκαιρος (the Jerk).

We suggested above that the second-person imperatives were spoken in dialogue, rather being stage directions. Parsons prefers the possibility that these are instructions being given by an actor-director, spoken to those performing the scene: “5189 seems to narrate the stage-action, with occasional quotations of the words to be uttered. ... The narrator is one of the players ..., who tells other players what to say ... and do...”²⁶ Neither Parsons’

²⁶ Parsons 28. In the first omitted passage, Parsons cites M. L. West, “The Way of a Maid with a Moke: P. Oxy. 4762,” *ZPE* 175 (2010) 33–40, at 36, raising the possibility that 4762 is also a mime script. If so (and it is not part of a narrative romance), it provides a parallel for the use of a third-person singular in a stage direction, but is not relevant to the question of other forms of stage direction.

interpretation nor our own explains the use of the indicatives in the place of imperatives: the late forms of the language and the spellings mean that certainty cannot be absolute in any case, but this appears a necessary conclusion, perhaps reflecting contemporary idiom. In both understandings, imperatives are meant: the difference is in whether they are part of a stage direction or not. Parsons says they are, and further that the first-person singular verbs are also stage directions, indicating an action performed by the presumptive speaker: ¹¹⁸ [ε]ἰσέρχομ(αι), ¹¹⁴ εἰσέρχομαι. Parsons understands these to mean “I enter [the performance area]” (as a stage direction). We prefer to see these as direct speech, even assuming that the supplement is correct in the first instance: compare the use of the genitives at ¹¹⁶ and ²³ εἰσερχόμ(ενου), where the genitives are confirmed by the accompanying το(ῦ).

For comparison, consider *P. Oxy.* LXXIX 5204, which offers a set of instructions for a pair of athletes in training in the form of combat directions. Each instruction is a second-person singular indicative, moving the athletes through a precise sequence of holds. The effect is exactly like a *kata* in modern martial arts: a physical routine used in training that follows a precise sequence that both flows naturally from one form to the next (as does not always happen in real fights), and which demonstrates the range of physical responses to particular attacks. In *kata*, these are the only form of instructions. In practice, *P. Oxy.* 5204 invites the trainer to read actions that are to be performed, which are then carried out by members of one pair,²⁷ as each trainee replicates an idealized series of moves. That is not theatre, however, where stage instructions are precisely intended for particular individuals, and it is the resulting performance that is primary, rather than the idealized sequence itself. Unlike the listeners of the exercise manual, for actors the use of a second-person singular form is not comprehensible in the absence of algebraic

²⁷ Or two pairs, or fifty: the use of the singular refers to the one individual within each pair, and the manual need not take account of the number of individuals listening to the instructions.

- ^{v14} εἰσέρχομαι
 “I am coming in.”
^{v16} το(ῦ) εἰσερχομ(ένου). ἐγὼ ὦδε
 (*with him entering*) “I’m here!”

These could be the same person, or they could be separate individuals. Subsequent to this, there is evidence of two more characters onstage: the ἄκαιρος (^{v18}) and **Γ**, who seems not to speak until ^{v28}. Nevertheless, the singular αὐτῷ (^{v15}) allows for the possibility that both apparent entrances refer to the same event, which suggests this sequence (^{v14–19}): someone (shouting from offstage? ^{v14} κλα[]) announces his own entrance; **Δ** stands by him and tells him to stop; either the same person who entered or another announces that they have arrived; **B** and **E** are apart but step forward and stop him falling over; this leads to **B** falling over the ἄκαιρος.

After this, another entrance follows, by the character **B**:

- ^{v23} το(ῦ) **B** εἰσερχομ(ένου) καὶ λέγοντος τῷ **Δ** μετὰ κό(σσου?) λαλης;
 (*with B entering and saying to Δ with a punch*) Are you babbling?

This is problematic, because it is not clear at what point **B** left the stage. At ^{v16–19} **B** was falling over the ἄκαιρος. Unless a departure followed immediately (and it would just be possible to fit it into the empty space in ^{v19}), we need to determine how **B** can be said to “enter” without having left the stage. The answer, we suggest, is a split-focus scene. Split-focus scenes are common in comedy, as the audience is presented two discrete locations simultaneously. They do not need to be physically far away from each other (as in an eavesdropping scene, one common variation of this comic device), though they can be. The dramatic spaces might represent two neighbouring rooms, indoors/outdoors, or simply two characters occupying the same space but not noticing each other. The defining element of such a scene is the audience’s imagined barrier that exists between the two spaces, which can be impermeable in one or both directions.²⁸ We

²⁸ Marshall, *Stagecraft* 161–167, 179–184.

suggest that this is how **B**'s "entry" at v23 is best understood, as the character crosses from one space to another. This suggestion does not invalidate the idea that εἰσέρχομαι is the normal word for a theatrical entrance, and is used in that sense earlier. It does show **B** to be masterfully in charge and able to negotiate two narrative spaces in a way that is not demonstrated by the other characters.

In this section, we have argued that through the repetition of dialogue, it is possible to discern substantial elements of the mime's plot. The vocabulary of stage directions described in section 1 creates meaningful action to accompany a plan by slaves enacted to dupe a foolish guest. The analysis has also revealed the sex of the characters and the hierarchy of many of them with respect to each other, and allowed us to discern elements of the use of the performance space.

3. *Characters*

We are now in a position to describe some of the characters more precisely. As mentioned in section 1, we believe the algebraic character notations are assigned according to the order of appearance in the script. This means that **Γ** will have appeared onstage before the extant segment of the script (and possibly in the first several lines of what remains). So far we have suggested that there are two domestic slaves (**B** and **Δ**), who hire a cook (**E**) as part of some ruse involving a character (**Γ**) who has arrived with a slave or parasite (**Α**), and the scheme is interrupted by the unexpected arrival of an ἄκαιρος. Let us spell out how we determine the identity of each.

A is present only for the first half of the script, departing in the last line of the recto and apparently not returning. In r16, **A** spits out food—or perhaps vomits, given the subsequent observation of **B**. Soon after (r21), **A** is chewing again. The strong association with food might in other comic contexts suggest that he is a parasite, which is fitting for the culinary theme of this script.

B appears throughout the script and is central to its action, especially the slapstick in the second half of the verso. Based on **B**'s constant discussion of food and drink (e.g. r18) and the deference shown to **A** (κῦρι at r15, r23), this character is likely a

domestic slave, possibly working in the kitchen. **B** is the focus of the physical comedy in the script, dealing out blows (as at ^r27, ^v23, and ^v29), and falling over the ἄκαιρος (^r18). **B** operates in conjunction with **A** throughout with **E** in the second half of the script. At ^v26, **B** is referred to by **E** with the vocative vonνα μου. This confirms **B** as female and almost certainly elderly: in addition to being a proper name, this term is probably related etymologically to modern terms for nurse and godmother.²⁹ As a result (and since none of the other characters is female), this makes **B** not just an agent, but also a victim of the violence on-stage, the subject of the question διὰ τί αὐτὴν ἔδιδες; (^v27). **B** is also the addressee of **A**'s insult, πόρνη ψωλοφάγε, delivered with the blows referred to in that question. **B** is therefore most likely to be seen as an elderly female slave. The complexity of this character is striking: she is clever, servile, ill-mannered, the victim of assault, and physically aggressive. This is a rich character that does not have any clear antecedent in the larger comic tradition.

Γ only appears at the end of the extant script (^v28), but if we are correct that the algebraic notation indicates the order of speaking (or appearance), **Γ** must have appeared in the lost portion of the script before this fragment begins. We suggest that **Γ** is to be identified as the στρατιώτης (professional soldier) mentioned in ^r8, an association corroborated by the mention of a soldier's cloak (^r3 ἱμάτια). **B**'s comment in ^r12, which begins **B** ἢ ἵππα- (**B**: "The horse- ...") could also evoke the soldier, who perhaps is meant to be understood as an *eques*, or to have a plumed helmet. Identifying **Γ** as a soldier strengthens the identification of **A** as a parasite, a likely companion for a soldier (cf. *Miles Gloriosus*, *Curculio*). It also allows us to make some inference about how the soldier is characterized. **A** asks (^r15) τουμαλακουσεστ'; which we take to be a question along the lines of "Is it from the coward?"³⁰ The word μαλακός can suggest effeminacy,

²⁹ Parsons 40.

³⁰ The form of the word on the papyrus is odd (μαλακους), if meant to be construed as either a masculine singular (referring to the soldier) or neuter plural (referring to household utensils, a usage found in Menander, *Perinth*).

softness, or cowardice. Indeed, elsewhere in mime it seems to be used of a specific stock character that would be singularly inappropriate for a soldier (see fr. 7 and 13 Cunningham).³¹ If that character were present in the scene as this is spoken, the text would likely adhere more closely to the expectations of the *μαλακός*. The insult here, and the juxtaposition with the character already met (however he was presented) affords new opportunities for humour. Since **Γ** is offstage at this point, this name-calling likely refers to him and could safely be delivered by a social inferior. By the end of the surviving portion of the script, it seems that the ruse has been detected, as someone is very angry. The papyrus ends just before the soldier speaks, but the dialogue immediately beforehand, perhaps describing **Γ**, observes that “he is breathing Orestes” (᾽31 Ὀρέστην πνέεται), a mythological allusion suggesting that he is furious.³²

Δ is apparently an elderly male kitchen slave, paired with **B** from the beginning of the performance, and the one dispatched to fetch a cook from the agora. (**Δ** departs at ^r20 and has returned by ^v5). **Δ** is the recipient of **B**'s violence in ^v23. Twice, **Δ** is addressed as *αββα* or *νεαββα* (see section 1), first at ^r6 (his response—*στήκει μοι* “Suits me!”—makes it clear that he is the one being addressed here), and then again in ^v27 (identified by his response to the question in ^v26). The word *αββα* is an affectionate term for a father figure, from Aramaic. By the sixth

fr. 6). The former seems more appropriate, but certainty is not possible as this would require emendation to *μαλακοῦ* in order to accommodate the genitive singular.

³¹ Cf. M. Andreassi, “La figura del *malakos* nel mimo della *Moicheutria*,” *Hermes* 128 (2000) 320–326; S. Perrone, “Back to the Backstage: The Papyrus P.Berol. 13927,” *Trends in Classics* 3 (2011) 126–153.

³² See Parsons 41 on this phrase as indicating madness or anger. Parsons argues for an additional allusion to Irus, the beggar in the *Odyssey*. If that is correct, the appropriateness for a soldier diminishes, but a case could be made for it being applicable to the *ἄκαρος*, who would then be about to speak (again). We see this as less coherent, preferring to have the soldier observe the actions on stage and angered by the result, which would lead him to fume, and thereby provide an on-stage audience responding to the action in a way that would add to the overall comic effect.

century, the term had been appropriated by Christians (it is cognate with *abbot*), but in Roman Egypt seems still to have Jewish associations. Calling Δ $\nu\epsilon\alpha\beta\beta\alpha$ thus identifies him not only as a kitchen slave, but an elderly male slave, a fact that would be corroborated by his stooped posture (ϵ^13).

E, appearing only on the verso, and simultaneously with the reappearance of Δ , is the cook (*mageiros*) who acts in concert with **B** at $\nu16$ – 17 . He has been hired for the day to prepare a meal, as is typical in Roman comedy (e.g. *Pseudolus*, *Curculio*).

Finally, we have the Jerk ($\acute{\alpha}\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$), who is identified with a non-algebraic marker in a stage direction first at $\nu18$. The $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ lives up to his name by immediately getting in the way of **B** (who falls over him) and seems to be interrupting **B**, Δ , and **E**. The lack of an algebraic identifier suggests one of two circumstances. First, possibly, the role is a stock or familiar character who is typically taken by a certain individual, such as the *archimimus*. Because this role appears to be comparatively minor within the plot, however, this explanation seems less likely than the alternative, which is that it is a second role being taken by a performer who has already been on stage. Since **B**, Δ , **E**, and Γ are all onstage, we suggest that the $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ is a second character played by the **A** actor, who left at the end of the recto: he returns here as an uninvited or unexpected dinner guest, who interferes with the slave's ruse. As seen in the previous section, he likely arrives with, or around the same time as, the soldier (Γ). Though there is no explicit evidence for role doubling in mime elsewhere as there is in the tragedy and comedy of several centuries previous, there is no obstacle to believing that **A** could play two parts. The fact that mime was unmasked is of course irrelevant to the question of doubling: Shakespeare and his contemporaries regularly doubled roles in an unmasked theatrical tradition.

If this is correct, then a few conclusions follow. First, the troupe size is likely five individuals: there is an economy, and the departure from the algebraic notation suggests that the numbers, which had indicated the order of entrance and/or speaking, are not used because this character is played by a performer who has already spoken but is in a new role. Second, the new role is in

some way distinct from the previous one. If **A** had initially played a parasite, to whom deference was shown, attending on the soldier, he is now playing a different character, the Uninvited Guest, who has forced himself upon the soldier and is visually distinct from the previous role, with a different costume. Instead of a social inferior to the soldier, he might now be a peer or even someone to whom the soldier would normally defer: another officer or a merchant, perhaps. Whatever his identity, his untimely presence proves to be a complication. This fits with the expectation of the character type in Theophrastus, arriving uninvited when a banquet has been prepared for another individual. Third, there will be some explanation for his intrusive bumbling nature that can be established quickly in the narrative and be understood by the audience to be undesirable. Perhaps he is drunk, which would explain him being in a position in which **B** falls over him.

4. *A connected narrative*

An overview of the complete narrative of *P.Oxy.* 5189 can now be assembled, with the action unfolding in twenty steps. There are, obviously, guesses involved in this reconstruction, but the sequence reflects the evidence of the papyrus and is supplemented by recurrent tropes in comedy, and by parallels with *P.Oxy.* 413 (= fr.6, 7 Cunningham). The script as we see it does not involve crime or scandal such as murder or adultery, but presents rather a trick, or series of tricks, performed by slaves upon free individuals. In keeping with the distinction drawn by Plutarch (*Symp.* 7.8, 712A), one could characterize it as a short *paignion* (as opposed to a longer *hypothesis*), but with a cast of five it nevertheless represents a substantial financial investment. There is no doubt that Plutarch's speaker would find *P.Oxy.* 5189 unsuitable for dinner parties.³³ We suggest that the action unfolded as follows:

1. A parasite (**A**) and the soldier (**T**) he attends arrive at a house for dinner. The parasite knocks, and is answered by an elderly female

³³ Tsitsiridis, *Logeion* 1 (2011) 184–185, and for *paignia* see Wiemkin, *Der griechische Mimos* 191–209.

- household slave (**B**). The soldier is introduced and welcomed. To reflect the sequence of the algebraic notations, one of two sequences is likely:
- a. (notations give order of speaking) the mime's opening constituted a long soliloquy in which the parasite flatters the soldier who stands silently preening. The parasite knocks, is answered, and only then the soldier speaks.
 - b. (notations give order of appearance in stage directions) the mime opened with only the parasite on stage, who knocks, is met by the slave, and then the soldier enters.
2. The servants take the soldier's travelling cloak (r3). The soldier departs to attend to business of some kind, leaving his parasite to ensure dinner is prepared.
 3. After the soldier's departure, another domestic slave (**A**), this time male, is introduced. (That this happens after the soldier's departure is probable given the persona the slave adopts in point 11 below.)
 4. The two elderly slaves produce food. The parasite joins them and the old woman complains "You come, you eat, you drink" (r14), while the parasite mocks his master as soft and effeminate (r15).
 5. The food, for whatever reason, is no good, and the parasite becomes sick (r16). The old woman therefore tells the old man to go to the market to hire a *mageiros* (r17). The old woman ensures that the parasite does not want anything further (r18 **B** ἔχεις τίποτε φαγείν; "Do you have anything to eat?"). This is both funny and somewhat cruel given his discomfort. When asked how the cook will be hired, the answer, again from the old woman, is a simple "Cash" (r19 **B** κέρμα). The parasite is concerned with his napkin as the old man leaves for the market (r20).
 6. As the parasite departs, someone asks "Why do you hit her?" and the parasite answers. With only three characters on stage at this point, it seems the male slave has not yet left, and he asks the parasite why he is hitting the female slave. The most immediate possibility is that it is because of the food she has prepared that has made the parasite sick. Although she has been the source of the ideas so far, the physical violence against the female character reinforces her low place in the hierarchy.
 7. The old woman formulates a plan: she speaks to her fellow slave, who has not yet left, and the details of the plan are presented (r24–26) and will be repeated later when the cook arrives (r7–10). The details conclude with an increase of physical violence, as she

- demonstrates (r28). This demonstration might be her showing how to strike her lightly, or might be violent blows in response for what she has already suffered. For reasons we are unable to explain from the fragmentary papyrus (though perhaps because he is sick), the parasite is willing to be part of this scheme: when he goes off he will not return, and he is evidently still onstage when the plan is being developed (**B** addresses him as κῦρι, r23).
8. The parasite is driven away with a threat of further violence. This threat comes either from the male slave, who might have a walking stick (r28 βᾶκλω) as part of his costume as a stooped old man, or the parasite, who has just travelled with the soldier. The male slave (**A**) then goes to market to hire a cook.
 9. Eventually, the old slave returns with the *mageiros* (**E**). With the old woman (**B**) they repeat the details of the plan (v7–10).
 10. The plan goes into action with the return of the soldier (**T**, possibly the entrance marked at v14). He returns with an uninvited guest (ἄκαιρος, the Jerk), who may be inebriated.
 11. The plan goes into effect regardless. The male slave is possibly impersonating a free person: his instructions from the woman had included “You play the man [or husband]” (r23 σὺ πο[ι]εῖς τὸν ἄνδρ.). In this role, he sticks by the side of the soldier (v15) and there may be some arranging of placements (seats for dinner?) with στήθι (v15) and ὦδε (v16).
 12. The female slave and the cook stand apart (eavesdropping, perhaps). They try to intervene in some way with the Jerk, removing him from the banquet location. This reinforces the split-focus use of the performance area. This attempt causes the female slave to fall over him. There is no reason to doubt that this is all in the sight of the audience, but notionally out of sight of those dining.
 13. The meal has commenced at v20, with the male slave (adopting some persona) and the soldier eating. The male slave is enjoying his meal a bit too much, chomping enthusiastically and falling silent (v21).
 14. The cook then nudges him to remind him of the plan, whereupon the male slave slips up further and addresses the soldier as “Boss” (κῦρι, v22), rather than a term suggesting nearer social equality.
 15. The female slave responds to this by engaging in this action (“entering” from the other part of the stage where she tripped on the Jerk). She strikes the male slave, who, carried away by his enjoyment of the meal, responds with an incorrect repetition of the original plan (r26, v9), saying καλῶς rather than κακῶς (v24). He then

- corrects himself, followed by more blows (v²⁵) from the female slave. The situation from the preparatory scene is reversed: no longer is the woman being hit, but she is doling out the violence.
16. There is another, single blow (v²⁶ ἄλλος), which we take to be the male slave hitting back, at which point the cook (who has by this time also joined the dining scene; the split-focus is no longer in effect) addresses her. At this point, either the cook or the soldier asks the male slave why he is hitting the female slave. He responds, with a correct repetition of the line he had mistaken earlier (v²⁷). These particular blows might be feigned (see point 7 above), and the plan is back on track. His explanatory line, v²⁸ ὅτι κακῶς ἔψησεν, therefore means “because she boiled it badly.” Though the food is of quality, the slaves continue to pretend it is foul, so that they can enjoy the feast after the departure of the various unexpected guests.
 17. The soldier then speaks (v²⁸).
 18. The female slave and the cook are once more separate from the action at the dinner table (v²⁹), while the male slave, presumably in conversation with the soldier and trying to maintain the ruse, threatens to kill someone (v³⁰). If we assume that the old slave’s disguise remains effective, it is not possible to determine who that is. The female slave is the most likely, given the above, though Parsons prefers a masculine rather than feminine pronoun here. This could make the potential victim the absent parasite (**A**) or the Jerk, but we wish to suggest an alternative. The persona the old slave is adopting does not know about the cook (**E**), but this might be another occasion when his performance slips. The mention of the cook (v²⁹) by the old slave would explain how the soldier sees through the ruse.
 19. Again, the female slave no longer stands apart, but joins the dining scene.
 20. The ruse is discovered by the soldier, as he (almost certainly) is described as “breathing Orestes.” He then begins to speak, as the papyrus breaks off.

We recognize that this reconstruction involves considerable amounts of speculation, and that not every detail will be correct. We nevertheless believe that in broad strokes this was the action, and hope that by presenting it in this way it will provide material to enhance the understanding of this script. There is a coherence

here that accords with the stage directions (section 1), the repetitions of dialogue (section 2), and the characters as they have been discerned (section 3). Most notably, the absence of the Jerk from the closing scene remains unexplained, and we would expect something to be done to recognize the sudden absence of the uninvited guest. This, then, proves to be another correspondence between the two characters that this actor has played: a sudden and (from the soldier's perspective) unexplained disappearance. We cannot say what follows in the stage action, though possibly comparisons with banquet scenes in scripted comedy could provide a model.³⁴

5. *A few conclusions*

P.Oxy. 5189 raises a series of specific issues, for which there is no clear answer. Nevertheless, we believe that we have made several advances in the understanding of the papyrus in terms of what the narrative represents and in terms of possibilities available to a mime author in the late empire for indicating stage directions.

First, there is a technical vocabulary for stage directions and this includes precise terms for entering and exiting: εἰσέρχομαι and ἐξέρχομαι. This same vocabulary is used when moving between dramatic spaces in a split-focus scene. That separation is represented in the stage directions by the word “apart” (ἔξωθεν). These terms are also being used as theatrical terms (as opposed to referring to a presumed interior space within a stage building, for example) in the dialogues ἐξέρχῃ ἕως τῆς ἀγορᾶς, εἰσέρχῃ (“You go off to market, you come back...”).

Second, there is no ‘interior’ space out of sight of the audience. Whereas Greek comedy typically takes place in public view, with doors leading to the inside of a house, nothing indicates whether the action here takes place inside or outside. Indeed, the only offstage location indicated is the agora, and this may be inferred by spectators without textual confirmation as the direction from which the soldier and the parasite had first entered. Characters

³⁴ I. M. Konstantakos, “The Drinking Theater: Staged Symposia in Greek Comedy,” *Mnemosyne* 58 (2005) 183–217.

can easily stand apart and be understood to be out of sight of the primary performance area, even though they remain in sight of the spectators.

Third, character **B**, an old woman who is responsible for much of the physical violence and slapstick that occurs, is also the guiding intelligence behind the ruse that is being perpetrated on **T**, the cowardly (*malakos*) soldier. Significantly, and perhaps contrary to expectation for a mime performance, we believe that the stage directions using masculine forms of participles presume that the performer of this role will be male. Within the genre of mime, this suggests a specialist kind of mimesis, involving unmasked crossdressing.

Fourth, within the narrative, the unexpected arrival of the *akairos* (whose identity is not known, but who may be another guest) appears to derail the entire scheme, and we take the absence of an algebraic marker for him in the stage directions to indicate that this is a second role played by the **A** actor. The mime creates similarities between these two, allowing them to be read against one another.

More tentatively, we suggest the possibility that the use of the affectionate terms *vónvα μου* for **B** and *αββα* (or possibly *νεαββα*) for **A**, and the unusual insult *ψωλοφάγε* are intended to suggest that **B** and **A** are to be understood as Jewish or Christian slaves. If so, this would represent a development on the servile connotations of slave names like Syros/Syra, more closely reflecting the population of sixth-century Egypt.

Finally, concerning the scheme itself: we believe that the narrative presents an elaborate ruse being played on the soldier, at least part of which involves convincing him that the food available is of low quality, and possibly that the hired *mageiros* is a bad cook, when in fact he is very good, producing food that is much better than the vomit-inducing fare that had been prepared initially. What is the point of the ruse? Is it simply to prevent the soldier from eating, thereby leaving a feast for the servants and the cook? And how does the unexpected arrival of the *ἄκαιρος* affect that? The surviving portion of this text does not allow confident answers to be suggested.

P.Oxy. 5189 is an important record of mime as it was performed in the late Empire. It reveals a complex degree of slapstick and situational humour, and documents it in a way that is otherwise unknown in all other surviving dramatic texts. Arguably, the closest parallels that we have to this sort of document are the scenarios of Flaminio Scala for the commedia dell'arte in the early 17th century.³⁵ One point of contact between the two performance traditions is the amount of physical violence. In commedia scenarios, it is regular for a slave to be beaten at the end of an act, and the violence seen in the papyrus may be endemic to the genre and not otherwise in need of explanation (just as it is not needed in a Punch and Judy show). If this is a valid comparison, however, then it follows that the dialogue presented here is only the outline, providing a prompt for histrionic expansion, improvised dialogue in and around this framework, and not limiting the precise words spoken by the actor. It nevertheless represents the richest single repository for ancient stage directions. For now, though, we hope to have pulled a little more from the papyrus scrap than was available previously, revealing elements of a comic world that existed in late Roman Egypt.³⁶

APPENDIX

We reproduce here Peter Parsons' edition of *P.Oxy.* LXXIX 5189, followed by our working translation of the text:

³⁵ See R. Andrews, *The Commedia dell'Arte of Flaminio Scala: A Translation and Analysis of 30 Scenarios* (Lanham 2008). We hope that future work can develop these associations.

³⁶ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at Greek Theatre Beyond the Canon at the University of Vienna, and at the University of Toronto. The authors would like to thank Laura Gianvittorio, John Starks, Regina Höschele, the anonymous reader, and the editors of this journal.

↓

-]χερια[
]...α.[]γπο.[
] ἰμάτια [. .]εγω.[
] ακουσ . []εσκ . . [
- 5
-] υ \bar{B} μνημόνευε εκ . [
-] αββα \bar{A} στήκει μοι. \bar{A} [
-] ἄνωθεν αποκ . . δο . . τον[
-] ιω . εω . εἶδε στρατιωτ[
-] [. .] μεν λαβινα . . [
- 10
-] ταύτην ἔδιρε[
-] οτε εἶπω κυρ . [] . υ
-] μ . . ετια \bar{B} ἢ ἵππα-
-] [] . [. .] . [.] . [] αυτην το(ῦ) κύφοντος
-] \bar{A} κολλῶντος λ[] αρολκιω εξια \bar{B} ἔρχη τρώγισ πίνις [
- 15
-] καικλα μα . \bar{A} τουμαλακουσεστί; \bar{B} νέ κύρ[ι
-] ἔ . \bar{A} πτύοντο[ς] φου ἐνόσησεν. \bar{B} δεῦ σοι εἰς τοκαπ[
-] . . ο [] εἰγω και ἀγόρασόν σοι μαγυρ[
-] εἰςβαλ . . . [ε]ἰσέρχομ(αι). \bar{B} ἔχεις τίποτε φαγεῖν; [
-] . . τον . . ρ . υ [.] ον μ . . \bar{B} κέρμα. \bar{B} ἐπὶ ἐκινων
- 20
-] υ τε[] δε τὸ φακιάλιν μου καὶ \bar{A} ἐξερχ(ομένου)
-] διὰ τί αὐτὴν ἔδιρες το(ῖς) κό(σσοις); \bar{A} τρώγοντος το(ῦ) \bar{B} θέλις
- κύρ[ι] π . . ωμ . [] . ικιαλιαμ . [] κια οὐκ ἔκω οκρι
- . . α [] . κω. \bar{B} ο . [] αν κύρι σὺ πο[ι]εῖς τὸν ἄνδρ . ἐγὼ
-] ἐξέρχη ἕως τῆς ἀγοράς, εἰσέρχη
- 25
-] . οτε φαγὴν παραθῶ σοι, γεύη και
- λέγεις μοι πό]ρνη, διὰ τί κακῶς ἔφησες; καιὶ
-] κο(σς-) εἶδε οὕτω. το(ῦ) \bar{B} κοσσίζωντο(ς)
-] . ἐγὼ δίδω σοι βάκλω. το(ῦ) \bar{A} ἐξερχ(ομένου)

→

]. ξετ[
]. Β κα[
]. νμ. [...]εγων[
]ωιωμ[...]ι Ε̄ κρα[
 5] Δ̄ δ... Β̄ Ε̄ ομ[
] Ε̄ είδε ποιείς cὺ τ. [
]καν σου ἐξέρχη ἕως [τῆς ἀγορᾶς, εἰσέρχη, λέ-
 γεις] μοι ἔτι τίποτε φαγεῖν; [καὶ ὅτε παραθῶ σοι καὶ
 γεύη, λέγεις μοι, πόρνη ψω[λοφάγε, διὰ τί κακῶς
 10 ἔ]ψησας; διδιδις μ[οι] δύο κό(σσους) ε[
 .]. νεν και βαστ[
 .]. λογου το(ῦ) ἐξερχο[
 καιτερπωατον[
 εἰσέρχομαι κλα[
 15 συν μου. Δ̄ κολλῶν αὐτῷ cτηθι. ανειασcτ[]cε. [
 το(ῦ) εἰσερχομ(ένου). ἐγὼ ὠδε το(ῦ) Β̄ ἔξωθεν καὶ Ε̄ ἀναποδ[ι-
 ζόντων καὶ λεγόντων απτος απτος απτος. τ[οῦ
 ἀκαίρ(ου) γὰρ ἴζοντος ὀπίσω τοῦ Β̄ καὶ Β̄ πίπτοντος [
 ἐπάνω τοῦ ἀκαίρου [...]. [...] φαγεῖν εε. [
 20 πάντα ἀγαθὸν εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν σου το(ῦ) φαγίου κα[
 τρώγοντος ἐξήχως καὶ cιωποῦντος Ε̄ νύσσοντ[ο]c
 αὐτὸν εἶπέ καὶ Δ̄ λέγοντος αὔ κῦρι καλῶς ἔχι;
 το(ῦ) Β̄ εἰσερχομ(ένου) καὶ λέγοντος τῷ Δ̄ μετὰ κό(σσου?) λαλης;
 Δ̄ εἶπέ, πόρνη ψωλοφάγε, διὰ τί καλῶς ἔψησας;
 25 αὔ αὔ, διὰ τί κακῶς ἔψησας; το(-) κό(σσ-) [] . αιλι Δ̄ . [] . . ζει. [
 εἶδε καὶ ἄλλος κό(σσος). Ε̄ νόνα μου. [c.8 δι-
 ἀ τί αὐτὴν ἔδιρες, νεαββα το(-) κ. [
 Δ̄ ὅτι κακῶς ἔψησεν. Γ̄ μακα. [
 γιρον το(ῦ) Β̄ ἔξωθεν κολλῶντος αυτ[c.12
 30 Δ̄ οἶδεν ὁ θεός, ἀποκτένω αυτ. [c.12
 τοcιρο. Ὅρέστην πνέεται. Γ̄ [

recto

-] hands [
] ... [
] cloak(s) [] I (?) [
] listen (?) ... [
 5] **B** Remember... [
] Father **Δ** Suits me. **A** [
] from above ... [
] ... He saw the soldier[
] ... take ... [
 10] [you/he] hit her [
] when I say “boss” [
] ... **B** The horse-
] ...her. (*with him bent over*)
] (*with A joining him*) **B** You come, you nibble, you drink...
 15] and you (fart)... **A** Is it from the coward? **B** Yes, Boss!
] Ah! Ah! (*with A spitting*) Phew! He is sick. **B** Come to the (market).
] ... and hire yourself a cook.
] ... I come in. **B** Do you have anything to eat?
] (How will you pay?) **B** Cash. (*with B over? them?*)
 20] ... my napkin (*and with Δ exiting [for the market]*)
] Why do you hit her with punches? **A** (*with B chewing*) Do you want...
 Boss...? ... I don't have veal, I have balls...
 **B** Boss, you make the man.
] You go off to market, you come back,
 25] when I give you something to eat, you taste it and
 you say to me,] “Whore, why do you boil it badly?” And
] (...punch...) Look! Like this! (*with B punching [sc. him]*)
] I will give you the shaft. (*with A exiting*)

verso

- ...
] **B** and [
 ...
] ... **E** (crying out?)
 5] **Δ** Why...? **B** and **E** (*together*) [
] **E** Look! You make... [
] and you go off to [market, you come back, you tell
] me, “What is there to eat?” [And when I give you something and
 you taste it, you say to me, “Cock-munching whore, why do you boil it

- 10 badly?" You give me two punches...[
]...and ...[
] (speech?) (with [someone] leaving)[
 and (I am delighted?)...[
 I am coming in...[
- 15 ... **Δ** (joining him) Stop! ... [
 (with him entering) I'm here! (with **B** apart and **E** [both] making
 [him] step back and saying) Don't fall! Don't fall! Don't fall!
 (with the Jerk sitting behind **B**, and **B** falling [
 on top of the Jerk) ... eat ...[
- 20 Bon appétit!
 (and with him [**Δ**] chewing madly and **E** being silent and nudging
 him, he says, as does **Δ**) Is everything okay, boss?
 (with **B** entering and saying to **Δ** with a punch) Are you babbling?
Δ Tell me, you cock-munching whore, why do you boil it well?
- 25 Ow! Ow! Why do you boil it badly? (with punches) ... **Δ** ... [
 Look! (and another [punch]) **E** Granny... [
 Why do you hit her, Father? (with punches) [
Δ Because he boiled it badly. **Γ** (My good man?) [
 (the cook?) (with **B** apart, joining them)... [
- 30 **Δ** God knows, I will kill (him?) [
 ... he breathes Orestes. **Γ** [

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