

FOR RICHMOND LATTIMORE¹

Menander's *Aspis*

Hugh Lloyd-Jones

IN 1913 the Florentine palaeographer Girolamo Vitelli² published from a parchment codex of the fifth century eighty-seven lines of a play of the New Comedy. Since this could not be identified, it was known as the Florentine Comedy; several people tried to reconstruct the whole plot of the play, with results which it is now amusing to compare with the reality. A much larger part of the same comedy proved to be contained in the famous codex of the third century bought by the late Martin Bodmer of Geneva, from which the *Dyskolos*—‘*The Disagreeable Man*’—was published, almost complete, in 1959. First, in 1967, some thirty lines which had somehow become detached from the Bodmer codex were published at Cologne.³ Then in 1969 the Swiss scholar Rodolphe Kasser, in collaboration with Colin Austin of Cambridge, published large parts not only of the *Aspis* but of the *Samian Woman*,⁴ supplementing those contained in the famous Menander papyrus in Cairo; soon after, Austin published an excellent critical edition and commentary on both plays.⁵ So we now have some 560 lines of the *Aspis*, some fragmentary. Until well into the third of the five acts, our text is more or less continuous; small fragments of the last two acts help us to see how the plot worked out. Since the play

¹ This essay is the substance of a lecture given at Bryn Mawr College on 24 April 1971 to honor Richmond Lattimore, poet and scholar, on the occasion of his retirement. It is offered as raw material for a version of one of Menander's most delightful plays, in the hope of tempting the distinguished translator of Greek epic, lyric, tragedy and Old Comedy to try his hand at New Comedy.

² *PSI* 126.

³ See R. Merkelbach, *ZPE* 1 (1967) 103.

⁴ *PBod.* XXV (Ménandre, *La Samienne*) and XXVI (Ménandre, *Le Bouclier*) (Geneva 1969).

⁵ *Menandri Aspis et Samia I, Textus (cum apparatu critico) et indices; II, Subsidia interpretationis* [Kleine Texte 188a,b] (Berlin 1969, 1970). The reader of this article will find it useful to have both volumes at hand, and to bear in mind that in some places the second corrects the text printed in the first. An Italian translation is offered by F. Sbordone, *RendNap* 1969, 1f; a German translation, with notes and introduction, by K. Gaiser, *Menander: Der Schild oder die Erbtöchter* (Zürich 1971).

was probably not more than about 870 lines long, we know the essentials of its action.

The Florentine Comedy turned out to be Menander's *Aspis*, 'The Shield'. It was called so because it started with a Phrygian slave, Daos, appearing before the two Athenian house-doors shown on the stage, leading a train of captured slaves from Asia Minor and carrying a battered shield. This is the shield of his master Kleostratos, a young Athenian of limited means, who, to earn a dowry for his sister, had gone off to serve as a mercenary in one of the campaigns in Asia Minor which in the time of Alexander's successors were constantly taking place.

"Today," Daos begins (1f), "is a very sad day for me, my master, and my reckonings are different from the hopes I had when we set off.⁶ Yes, I believed you would come back with glory from the campaign, and would live the rest of your life in splendid style. You would have the title of general or of counsellor; and your sister, for whose sake you made that expedition, you would marry to a bridegroom worthy of her, once you had returned to the home where you had been so missed; and for me would come a rest from my long labours in old age, in return for my loyalty. But now you are gone, unexpectedly snatched from us; and I, your old attendant to school,⁷ Kleostratos, have come bringing back the shield which failed to preserve you as you preserved it; for you were a valiant man if ever there was one."

It looks as if Smikrines, the young man's uncle, steps forward at this point; he has been listening to Daos, but has not yet been taken notice of by him. "What an unlooked-for thing to happen!" he remarks. "Terrible!" replies Daos, I fancy rather drily. "But how did he perish?" Smikrines asks, "How did it come about?" "A soldier," Daos answers, "finds it hard to keep himself safe, but easy to get killed." "All the same, Daos, tell me the story!"

Now Daos launches off on a narration, starting off with an account of the locality in the manner inherited by Greek historians from the

⁶ Line 3 *ἐξορμώμενος ed.pr., ἐξορμωμένων* Lloyd-Jones, Sandbach. A third possibility is *ἐξορμωμένον*.

⁷ "The pedagogue, or tutor, was a family slave who accompanied the boy child to and from school, carried his belongings, made him do his homework, and instructed him in proper behaviour": C. M. Havelock, *Hellenistic Art* (Greenwich [Conn.] 1970) 135; see the Hellenistic statue of an elderly pedagogue in the Louvre which she illustrates (n.121); cf. H.-I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, transl. G. Lamb (New York 1956) 143-44.

epic (23f). The army with which his master was fighting had been operating in Lycia, near the River Xanthus, and had won a number of battles, so that the local 'barbarians' had taken to the hills. Success had made the invaders careless, and they had swarmed out of their encampment in large numbers to plunder the unprotected villages of the Lycian plain. "How splendid!" says Smikrines when he hears this; one other Smikrines, at least, was avaricious, and the Greek audience will have known how to construe this comment. His master, Daos goes on, had acquired some 600 gold pieces, together with a quantity of plate and the slaves now present on the stage, and had ordered him—Daos—to convey this property to Rhodes, entrust it to a friend, and then return to him. But on the day Daos left, the enemy, whose scouts had told them of the situation, occupied unobserved a hill in front of the camp; and in the evening, when most of the Greeks were tipsy,⁸ they delivered a surprise attack. "Very bad!" says Smikrines, who would never have allowed himself to get drunk while in possession of considerable plunder. Daos, spending the night, it seems, in the camp of a neighbouring detachment, was woken about midnight by loud noises. His companions now occupied a strong position on a hill, where they kept being joined by wounded fugitives from the battle. "How lucky for you," says Smikrines, "that you were sent off when you were!"

Daos' companions entrenched themselves in their position, and in due course were joined by those who had scattered in pursuit of plunder. After three days they learned that the Lycians were carrying off their prisoners to the hill villages, so they advanced to the scene of the battle. There they found corpses, by now unrecognizable; by one of them lay the battered shield of Kleostratos which Daos now carries. The bodies were hastily thrown upon a single pyre and burned; and Daos set off for Rhodes, and after a few days there sailed home, carrying his master's booty.

"You say you have 600 gold pieces with you?" asks Smikrines (82). "Yes." "And some plate too?" "It weighs about forty minas—heir that you are!"⁹ "What? Did you think *that* was why I asked you? By Apollo!

⁸ At 45f the text is difficult; see D. Del Corno, *ZPE* 6 (1970) 213–14. There is much to be said for emending *γίναται* in line 47 to *πίναται*. W. G. Arnott, *Gnomon* 42 (1970) 20, says this reading is impossible. As a reading of the papyrus, certainly; but as an emendation? It would have to be followed by a full stop.

⁹ I incline to the view of the 'complures' mentioned in Austin's note on line 84 (II 11).

But the rest was captured, was it?" "Most of it, pretty well, except what I had taken away. In there there are garments and military cloaks; and all this crowd that you see belongs to the family." "I don't care about that!" says Smikrines unconvincingly, "If only *he* were alive!" "If only he were!" says Daos, "Let us go inside to tell the sad tale to those I wish could never hear it." "After that," says Smikrines, "Daos, I would like to talk with you at leisure. But for the time being I think I too will go inside, and think about what will be the gentlest way of handling them." The choice of that word 'gentlest' reminds one of Uriah Heep.¹⁰

Smikrines goes into his house, Daos enters the house of his master's uncle, Chairestratos, and the stage is left empty for the divinity who speaks the prologue speech (97f). "If what has happened were really a disaster for these people," she begins, "I should not be following after them, since I am a goddess." The Greek gods abandoned the unfortunate, as Artemis abandons the dying Hippolytus, or his god abandons Antonius before his suicide.¹¹ "As it is," she continues, "they are astray and do not know the truth; but whoever attends to what I am going to say will learn it." She explains that when the alarm was sounded Kleostratos was with a companion, and in the excitement this man took Kleostratos' shield. He was killed and his body found by Daos; but the real Kleostratos was taken prisoner, and will presently return home. "It makes little difference that the report [of Kleostratos' death] is false," says a scholar who argues that the said report "spread an air of sadness through the first part of the play."¹² On the contrary, it makes all the difference in the world; and we learn it very early in the action.

The goddess goes on to explain Kleostratos' family circumstances. Smikrines is his uncle on his father's side, his father clearly being dead; this uncle is "the greatest villain in the world." "He knows no kins-

If Austin's original division is kept, *κληρονόμε* must be preceded or followed by a dash; a vocative cannot stand alone.

¹⁰ There is a point in Smikrines talking of dealing *gently* with persons, none in his talking of dealing so with circumstances; so I disagree with Del Corno, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) 214, who wants to take *τούτοις* as neuter.

¹¹ Add to Austin's parallels Plut. *Vit.Ant.* 75, a passage which inspired one of Cavafy's finest poems, *Ἀπολείπειν ὁ θεὸς Ἀντώνιον*.

¹² D. Del Corno, *AeR* n.s. 15, fasc. 2-3 (1970) 66: "Poco conta che la notizia—como apprenderemo—sia falsa."

man or friend," the goddess tells us, "and takes no account of any of the things that are considered disgraceful in life, but wants to have everything; that is his sole concern. He lives alone, with one old woman to look after him."

The house that Daos has entered, the goddess continues, belongs to another uncle of Kleostratos on the father's side, a younger brother of Smikrines; his name, we learn later, is Chairestratos. This uncle is a great deal nicer than Smikrines; he is also richer. He is married for the second time; his wife has a son by her first marriage, whose name, we learn later, is Chaireas, and a daughter by Chairestratos himself. Being a kind man, and realizing that Kleostratos is likely to be away a long time, Chairestratos has arranged that his niece, Kleostratos' sister, shall be married to his own stepson, Chaireas; and he is supplying her with a dowry of two talents out of his own money.

Their wedding is on the point of taking place; but the scare that has now arisen, the goddess explains, will throw everything into confusion. For the wicked uncle, Smikrines, has cast covetous eyes upon the money, plate and slaves brought back by Daos, and he sees a way of getting them for himself. Athenian law ordained, oddly enough to our way of thinking, that when property had descended to an heiress her male relatives should have the option of marrying her to keep it in the family, in order of seniority. Also, it permitted marriage between uncle and niece; so Smikrines, as the oldest surviving male member of the family, is legally entitled to oblige the unfortunate sister of Kleostratos to marry him. The goddess explains immediately that he will not succeed, but will only give himself much trouble and expose his depravity in the eyes of all. Like other divine prologue-speakers of the New Comedy, she has used her knowledge of past and future facts hidden from the characters to relieve the apprehension of any member of the audience ill enough acquainted with the genre to be afraid the plot may turn out badly for the sympathetic characters. Finally, the goddess gives her name and vanishes. Prologues of the New Comedy are spoken not by major divinities, but by minor gods, like Pan in the *Dyskolos* or the star Arcturus in Plautus' *Rudens*, adapted from the Greek of Diphilus, or by personified abstractions, like Ignorance in *The Girl Who Has Her Hair Cut*, or Help in Plautus' *Aulularia*. This time it is an abstraction very often personified in Menander and in the Hellenistic Age generally, Tyche herself. If we

translate her name 'Fortune', we must be aware that in Menander Tyche does not mean blind chance; fortune in Menander is determined by the gods, as I shall argue later.

Smikrines now emerges from his house, talking to the audience or to himself, as the convention of the New Comedy permitted. "In case anyone should say that I'm a great miser," he begins (149f), "I never enquired how much money he had with him, nor how much silver, nor took any count, but let them bring it in here immediately—you see, they run me down on every possible occasion; in fact, the exact figure will be found, so long as those who carry it in are slaves." That looks like a sinister threat that he can always get the truth out of slaves, if necessary by torture. "I *think*," he continues, "that they'll abide by law and justice; but if not, no one is going to let them get away with it. But I want to warn them not to hold this wedding-feast that's going forward. Perhaps it's odd even to say it; but it's no time for a wedding, when such news as this has come. Still, I'll knock on the door and call out Daos; he's the only one who will take any notice of me." Like many people who do not deserve to be taken notice of, Smikrines is acutely sensitive to neglect.

Daos emerges from Chairestratos' house, still talking to someone inside it whom he is trying to comfort (164f). Smikrines accosts him, and explains that he wishes that Kleostratos were still alive, but that since he is not, and since his brother is always taking advantage of him, and is now proposing to marry his niece to someone or other without his consent, he will not allow his property to be plundered by these people, but will take the advice given him by some of his friends, and, in accordance with the law, marry the girl himself.

At this point the text is damaged, but it seems that Smikrines demands that Daos shall facilitate his plan by urging the other members of the family to comply with it. Clearly Daos has great influence with Chairestratos, and Smikrines knows this. Daos first reminds him of the old Delphic saying "Know thyself," and then explains that he can do his duty as a slave by furnishing all possible particulars of the affairs of his late master, but cannot be expected to intervene in a dispute within the family. "But, tell me," says Smikrines, "do you think I'm doing anything wrong?" "I am a Phrygian," answers Daos, "many things that are approved of among you seem to me appalling, and *vice versa*. Why do you have to worry about me? You have more sense than I, presumably." "Now you seem to be saying something

like ‘Don’t bother me!’,”¹³ says Smikrines; and he goes off to the agora to try and find one of Chairestratos’ family. Left alone, Daos calls upon Tyche, the goddess we have just seen on the stage, and asks what he has done wrong to make her afflict him with such a change of masters.

Before Daos can reenter the house, out comes a cook, accompanied by the slave who is his assistant and soon to be followed by a waiter. Greek families did not often eat meat, and on the special occasions when they did, cooks were hired in the market-place; these cooks were standard figures of fun in New Comedy, usually on account of their dishonesty, their curiosity or their boastfulness. “When I *do* get a commission,” the cook says (216f), “either someone dies, so that I have to take myself without my fee, or some woman in the house who no one knew was pregnant has a baby, and suddenly the sacrifice is off, and I’m clean gone!¹⁴ What miserable luck!” “Do go away, cook!” pleads Daos. “Why what do you think I’m doing?” demands the cook. Then to his slave: “Take the knives, boy, and be quick about it! I came with a contract for ten days at three drachmas a day; I thought I had them; some corpse has come from Lycia and snatched them from me! When the people in the house have suffered a disaster like that, you rascal, when you see the women weeping and beating their heads, are you carrying out your oilcan empty?¹⁵ Remember what a chance you’ve been given! It’s not Spinther I have for my assistant, it’s Aristides—Aristides the Just! I’ll see you go without your supper! But the waiter is staying for the funeral feast, it seems!” Now the waiter emerges, still demanding money from someone in the house and in doing so perpetrating a pun which is even feebler in English than it is in Greek. At this point the text is damaged,¹⁶ but it is probably this waiter, not the cook, who abuses the loyal Daos for having let down the slaves’ trade union by bringing back his master’s property when he could so easily have run away with it. He asks Daos his

¹³ See Austin on 210f (II 21); I agree with him, except that I would follow E. W. Handley, *BICS* 16 (1969) 103, in reading πράγματ’ <ῆ> τοιουτότροπόν τι· μανθάνω.

¹⁴ When I first read line 218, the thought crossed my mind that perhaps Kleostratos had left his cousin, the daughter of Chairestratos, pregnant at his departure. A moment’s reflexion convinced me that this was impossible, common as such events are in the New Comedy. The two things that can cause a feast to be cancelled are death and birth, and that must be the cook’s point, as at Philemon fr.107, quoted by Austin on 216f.

¹⁵ I cannot agree with Del Corno’s ingenious guess (*op.cit.* [*supra* n.8] 216) that the notion of *κενοταφείν* is somehow relevant.

¹⁶ Gaiser’s equation of line 236 with fr.adesp. 287 (Kock) can hardly be right.

nationality, and on learning that he is a Phrygian, replies, "Then you're no good for anything, a woman-man. We Thracians are the only men; that's why the treadmills are full of us."¹⁷ "Take yourself off," says Daos, and then he notices the approach of a crowd of drunken revellers, which according to the convention of the New Comedy stands for the entry of the Chorus for the first of its incidental dances between the acts. "You are wise," Daos sadly remarks to them, "Fortune is uncertain; enjoy yourselves while there is time!"¹⁸ When in the *Persians* of Aeschylus the ghost of King Darius gives similar advice on his parting to his old councillors, an English Victorian commentator calls it "a futile maxim, contemptuously put in the mouth of a dead tyrant."¹⁹ In fact, it represents the collective wisdom of the great age of Greece.

The second act begins with the two brothers, Smikrines and Chairestratos, meeting in front of their houses. The funeral, Chairestratos says, must be taken care of (250f). It shall be taken care of, says his brother; after that, let Chairestratos not promise the girl to anyone. "It is not your business," he continues, "it is mine. I am older than you are; you have at home a wife and daughter, and I must have them too." "Smikrines, do you care nothing about common decency?" protests his brother. "What do you mean?" "At your age, are you going to take a girl in marriage?" "Am I the only man to marry late in life?" "Take the thing like a human being, Smikrines, I beg you. The girl was brought up with Chaireas, who was going to marry her. All right! You shall suffer no disadvantage; take all this property, have full rights, we give it to you; but let the girl have a husband of the proper age. I'll give two talents of my own money by way of dowry." "Tell me," Smikrines replies, "do you think you're talking to an idiot? Why, am I to take the property and leave the girl to him, so that if they have a child, I'm to be prosecuted for having its property?" "Is that what you believe? Drop it!" "Believe, do you say? Send Daos to me to give me an inventory of the stuff he brought." At this point the text is mutilated, but clearly Smikrines goes off. Chairestratos says that he has always hoped that Chaireas would marry his niece, Kleostratos would marry his daughter, and the two

¹⁷ M. D. Reeve (*ap.* Austin II 26, on 244f) may be right in transferring the end of the speech from *τοιγαροῦν* to Daos and changing *ἡμῶν* to *ὑμῶν*.

¹⁸ I take *εὐφραίνεσθ'* as imperative, but it may be present indicative.

¹⁹ A. Sidgwick, in his useful edition of Aeschylus' *Persae* (Oxford 1903, repr. 1937) *ad loc.*

young couples would inherit his possessions. "May I quit this life as soon as possible," he exclaims, "before seeing what I never dreamed of happen!"

At this point Chairestratos returns into his house, where as we learn later he collapses into something like a faint, and remains motionless for some time.²⁰ His stepson Chaireas, who now enters, laments the sudden change in his fortunes in a speech of a standard type commonly assigned to young heroes of the genre. Now Daos leaves the house, still talking to Chairestratos inside it. "Chairestratos, this is not the right behaviour!" he exclaims (299f), "Get up! You can't despair, or lie there like that! Chaireas, go and comfort him! Don't give in! The fate of all of us depends, pretty well, on him! No, open the doors! Show yourself! Will you let down your friends, Chairestratos, in this ignoble way?" "Daos, my boy," says his master, "I'm in a bad way; the situation drives me to distraction. In heaven's name, I'm not myself; I'm almost off my head, into such a frenzy does my admirable brother put me already with his villainy. You see, he means to get married himself!" "What, get married?" says Daos, "But will he be able to?" "The noble fellow says so," replies Chairestratos, "even though I am offering him everything that Kleostratos sent back." "The villain!" "Villain is the word! I shan't live, by heaven, if I'm to see this happen!" "Then how could one get the better of the scoundrel?" asks Daos.²¹ "It would be very hard." "Yes, hard, but it can still be done." "Can it? Well, such an achievement would be worth a real effort, by Athena!"

The next five lines are missing or fragmentary, but at the end of them Daos is saying that when you see your enemy full of excitement

²⁰ The movements of Chairestratos from 283 to 305 present a problem, stated by Del Corno, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) 216f. My solution is not the same as his. I think Chairestratos enters his house at 283; then at 299 Daos enters, talking back into the house and addressing Chairestratos. Chairestratos is not visible, and the audience learns of his collapse only from Daos' words. At 300, Daos asks Chaireas to comfort his stepfather, on whom everything, for the whole family (Del Corno p.216 is most unconvincing in his treatment of ἡμῶν ἄπαιον), depends; μὴ ἴτρεπε is addressed to Chaireas, and means "Don't let him (*i.e.* Chairestratos) get away with it!" Then he cancels his request to Chaireas with "No, open the doors!" (Del Corno is right in arguing that this refers to opening the doors from *outside*.) "Show yourself!" If *καυρόν* is right, this means that Chaireas must show himself to Chairestratos; but it may be a mistake for *αὐτόν*. It should have a full stop after it, for the last sentence of the speech is addressed not to Chaireas but to Chairestratos.

²¹ The division between speakers is uncertain at this point; see Austin II 32 (on 318f) and Del Corno, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) 220.

in the expectation of easy victory, then is the time to strike and to get the better of him. "He sees and expects nothing except his goal," says Daos, "and that makes him a poor judge of reality." "Then what is your advice?" asks his master, "I'm ready to do whatever you demand." "You must stage a catastrophe," replies Daos, "People must think you've done just as you said just now that you would do; that the disaster of Kleostratos and to the girl whom you were giving in marriage, and the sight of the extreme despair of Chaireas, whom you consider as your son, have driven you to desperation, and that you've succumbed to one of those sudden attacks. Most people's worst illnesses are caused by grief; and he knows that you're bilious²² and melancholic by temperament. Then we'll bring in a doctor talking his jargon and saying that the trouble is pleurisy, or inflammation of the diaphragm, or any one of the complaints that take people off quickly." "Well?" "All of a sudden, you're dead! We shout, 'Chairestratos is gone!' and beat our heads in front of the doors. You are locked away inside, but a dummy corpse, in a shroud, will be put out for all to see." "Do you see what he's getting at?" says Chairestratos to Chaireas. "No, by Dionysus!" is the reply. "I don't either!" "Your daughter," goes on Daos, "becomes an heiress, just like the girl who is now being claimed. She has perhaps sixty talents; the other girl has only four; and since the old miser bears the same relationship to both . . ." "Now I understand!" exclaims Chairestratos. "Of course, if you're not a blockhead," says Daos—I wonder whether that remark is not made *sotto voce*; "At once he'll be only too glad to give the other girl in marriage to the first comer before three thousand witnesses, and he'll take your daughter!" "Like hell he will!" "He'll think he's going to! And he'll go round the whole house with the keys, putting seals on the doors, dreaming a dream of wealth." "What about the dummy of me?" "It will lie there, and all of us will sit around it,²³ waiting for him to approach. . . ."

The next lines are wholly or partly missing, but it is interesting that one of them (367) contains the word 'double'. In Attic law a person convicted of theft had to pay double the value of the stolen property,

²² This medical use of *πικρός* is not noted by *LSJ*; but see their article on *πικροχόλος*.

²³ Miss Donna Kurtz observes that this seems to confirm the view that the mourners shown on Geometric vases that depict funerals were imagined as surrounding the dead man; this had been conjectured, but had been doubted on the ground that the effect in question might have been due to the absence of perspective.

and it looks as if Daos suggested that, when Smikrines had claimed his brother's property and perhaps removed some of it, Chairestratos should emerge from hiding and threaten to prosecute him for theft.²⁴ "I like your idea, Daos," says Chairestratos, "That's after my own heart! What revenge could you take on the scoundrel that would be more severe?" That remark seems to confirm my suggestion about the double penalty for theft; no punishment would hurt Smikrines more than a heavy fine. "By Zeus!" says Daos, "I'll inflict proper punishment for any pain he's caused you in the past. It will be a real case of the wolf opening his jaws and then having to go away empty!"²⁵ But we must act at once! Do you know a foreign doctor, Chaireas, who's clever, but a bit of a fraud?" "No, I'm afraid I don't." "Well, I wish you did." "Never mind, I'll fetch one of my friends, and I'll ask for a toupée and a doctor's cloak and a stick for him; he'll talk like a foreigner as best he can." "Well, fetch him quickly!" "And what am I to do?" inquires Chairestratos. "Why, what we planned; die, and good luck to you!" "I will." "Don't let anyone go out, but keep the secret valiantly." "Who is to be in the know?" asks Chaireas. "I must tell only my wife and the girls," says his father, "so that they don't cry, and let the other people in the house abuse me in the belief that I'm a corpse." "You're right!" says Chaireas, "Let someone bring the old fellow opposite!"²⁶ "To be sure," Chaireas continues, "he'll have a fitting diversion and some worry, if only the catastrophe can be set on its feet, and our doctor can achieve some plausibility."

The third act starts with the emergence of Smikrines, talking to the audience, or to himself. "A fine turn of speed Daos showed in bringing me a list of the property! Great consideration for me he's displayed! Daos is in with *them*. Well, I'm glad he is! I'm delighted to

²⁴ See Austin II 35, on 366f.

²⁵ Instances of this proverb are collected by Austin II 35, on 372f. I think there is another at *Epit.* 663–64, where Chairestratos, who apparently covets Habrotonon, but at this point looks like not getting her, might well be called a wolf who has "gone away" after having opened his jaws in vain. Until now the only other Chairestratos known was the young hero of Menander's *Eunuchus*, in Terence called Phaedria (Persius 5.162). But now that the *Aspis* presents us with a Chairestratos in the other age-group, the view that Chairestratos of the *Epitrepontes* is an older man gains in plausibility. Did he at the end get Habrotonon, and accord her the same status that Chrysis enjoys in Demeas' household in the *Samia*? I offer this speculation only with great caution.

²⁶ Del Corno, *op.cit.* (*supra*. n.8) 221–23, convinces me that εἶσω τις ἀγέτω τουτονί at 387 must refer to Smikrines, not Chairestratos. Chaireas and Daos between them could surely support Chairestratos, however enfeebled, without calling for another person.

have a pretext for my dealings with him, so that I need not be kindly any more in making my enquiries, but can act according to my interest. You see, clearly there is twice as much that he hasn't shown me! I know the tricks of that shifty slave."

Now Daos runs out of Chairestratos' house in an excited state;²⁷ he does not appear to notice Smikrines. "Ye gods!" he cries, "a terrible thing has happened! I never would have thought a man could fall into such a state so suddenly! A sky-splitting²⁸ thunderbolt has hit the house!" "What's the matter with him?" says Smikrines to himself. The next four lines cannot be made out; but after them we find Daos trying to do justice to the special horror of the situation by uttering a series of quotations from tragedy. "'Not every man enjoys prosperity,'" he quotes from the opening of Euripides' *Stheneboea*. "Very good, again . . .," and then follows another quotation, only partially preserved. "Daos, you wretch, where are you rushing to?" asks Smikrines. "This, too," says Daos, "'the fate of mortals is Fortune, not Providence! Admirable! 'A god creates guilt for mortals when he wishes utterly to ruin a house.'" The former quotation comes from the fourth-century tragedian Chairemon; the second comes from the celebrated passage of Aeschylus' *Niobe* quoted by Plato and partly preserved in the Florence papyrus.²⁹ "The majestic Aeschylus . . .," Daos continues; Smikrines cuts in with, "Are you making a collection of aphorisms, you rascal?" "Incredible, illogical, terrible!" continues Daos, citing, evidently, another tragedy. "Won't he ever stop?" wonders the other. "'But which among the plagues of mortals is incredible?'" quotes Daos, "Karkinos says, 'For in one day a god makes the fortunate man unfortunate'. All those are good, Smikrines!"—now at last he has condescended to notice him. "But what do you mean?" "Your brother—O Zeus, how can I explain it?—is pretty well dead." "What, the one who was talking with me a moment ago? What's the matter with him?" "A bilious attack, some kind of stroke of grief, a mental seizure, a choking fit." "Poseidon and the gods, what a terrible affliction!" "There is no thing so awful to relate, no disaster'," quotes Daos from the opening of Euripides' *Orestes*.

²⁷ W. S. Anderson, *Phoenix* 24 (1970) 229f, rightly recognizes another instance of the 'running slave'.

²⁸ *κηπιός* . . . *ραγδαῖος* (402–03): cf. Soph. fr.478 P., *βροντῆ δ' ἐρράγη δι' ἀστραπήσ*, with Pearson's note.

²⁹ Fr.277 Lloyd-Jones=273 Mette, 15–16.

“You’re killing me!” Smikrines protests. “‘For the gods have ordained that afflictions should come unexpectedly’. The first is from Euripides, the second from Chairemon; they are no ordinary writers.” “But has any doctor come?” asks Smikrines. “None,” says Daos, “so Chaireas has gone to fetch one.” “Which doctor?” “Why, this one, it appears,” says Daos, seeing Chaireas arrive in company with a medical-looking person, “Sir, do hurry! . . .” After a few missing syllables Daos delivers a final quotation: “‘their very extremity renders the sick testy’.”

At this point Chaireas and Daos, with the supposed doctor, vanish into the house, “If they see me,” says Smikrines, “they’ll at once say I’ve come in satisfaction, that I know for certain; and he himself will not be pleased to see me.” Then he goes into his own house.

Now comes a gap in the text. Eighteen lines later, Chaireas and the doctor have emerged from the house and are talking outside to Smikrines; the doctor speaks in generalised Doric dialect and parades the technical terminology of his art. The Spartan antiquary Sosibius³⁰ remarked that the comic doctor was a stock figure of the ancient Doric farce, and this specimen was not the only one in Attic comedy; in a fragment of Alexis’ comedy *The Woman Who Took Mandragora* someone says that if a native doctor recommends giving a patient beetroot, calling that vegetable by its Attic name of *τευτλίον*, he is despised, but if a foreigner prescribes it, pronouncing it *κευτλον*, people treat him with respect. “I think it has struck him right in the diaphragm,”³¹ says the doctor, “The name we give this is ‘phrenitis’.” “I see,” says Smikrines, “What about it, then?” “There is no hope of recovery whatsoever,” says the doctor, “If I’m not to offer you false comfort, attacks like this are fatal.” “Don’t comfort me,” says Smikrines, “Tell me the truth.” “It’s out of the question that this man can live,” says the doctor, “He’s throwing up part of the bile; his eyes are growing dim.” The next dozen lines are fragmentary, but there is mention of foaming at the mouth, and we find the phrase “looks like a funeral.” “Let us be going, boy,” the doctor says to his assistant. Smikrines calls him back; the text is too damaged for us to see what he wants to ask him; but since it seems that when Smikrines says that many unexpected things happen the doctor accuses him of making fun of him, presumably Smikrines has asked once more if there is any

³⁰ See Austin II 35, on 374f, and also M. Gigante, *ParPass* 24, fasc. 127 (1969) 302f.

³¹ ‘Diaphragm’, not ‘brain’; so, rightly, F. H. Sandbach, *Entretiens Hardt* 16 (1970) 115.

hope. Then he says to Smikrines, "You don't look at all well yourself; you are sickening for a wasting disease. Why, you look altogether like death!" With that, he leaves. "To be sure," says Smikrines, "The women are plundering the house as if it were enemy territory.³² Instructions are being given to the neighbours through the water-pipes." When a death occurred in a house, its inmates could not approach other people for fear of ritual pollution; presumably that explains the last remark. Daos seems to come out of Chairestratos' house at this moment; he says aside that he will give Smikrines a shock, but then the text breaks off.

Now comes our biggest gap, which covers about 205 lines. The next portion of the text that we possess is scanty remains of two scenes at the end of the fourth act. The first contains part of a conversation; one speaker is Smikrines, but we do not know who are the others. A few lines after the speech of Smikrines, we find the words, "Betrothal is perhaps . . . when such a . . . has happened to you . . . I am ready . . . everything he orders . . . in front of you" (484-90). It seems possible that the ruse has had one of its desired effects in inducing Smikrines to betroth Kleostratos' sister to the first applicant, who would of course be Chaireas. Next comes a scene in which Kleostratos appears before the door of Chairestratos' house (491f). Like someone returning home in a tragedy, he salutes his native country, or, possibly, the door of the house. He wonders whether Daos has got back safely. When he finally knocks, Daos from inside asks, "Who is there?" "I am." "Who are you looking for? The master of the house is dead . . ." "Dead? Alas . . ." "Go away and don't disturb people who are mourning . . ." "Ah me! Uncle, what a . . ." A gap is followed by the words "You wretch"; then Daos starts to address Kleostratos with "Young man" and now at last puts his head out of the door. "O Zeus!" he exclaims. "What do you mean, Daos," begins the answer of Kleostratos. Soon after Daos says, "I have you," a classic formula in recognition scenes, found in the *Electras* of both Euripides and Sophocles.³³ Eleven lines after that, the fourth act ended. It seems clear that, as in each of the Menandrian plays which we know well enough to decide this question, the working out of the plot was complete at

³² I follow Sandbach *ap.* Austin II 43, on 465. Gaiser, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) 73-74, gives the whole of 465-67 to Daos. He may be right, but *ἐπιάρρηται* does not mean 'wird gemeldet'.

³³ It is also in the recognition scene of Menander's *Misoumenos* (214).

the end of the fourth act, and the fifth simply showed the final happiness of the sympathetic characters. It centred on the *komos*, the scene of revelry inherited from the Old Comedy, which in this play, as often, will have taken the form of the feast held to celebrate the double wedding.

Of the fifth act we have only portions of the first twenty-nine lines; after that, about ninety lines are missing. Near the beginning of the part preserved there is mention, as we should expect, of a double wedding; then of "his daughter" and "his niece"; then of "all the property." Near the end of the fragment, we find what may be the formula of betrothal so common in the final acts of the New Comedy.

What happened in the last ninety or so lines? I think we may safely assume that the loyalty and intelligence of Daos, the Admirable Crichton among the slaves of extant New Comedy, were rewarded with the gift of freedom and the competence he had said goodbye to the hope of in the opening lines of the play. At the end of the *Dyskolos*, the slave Getas and the cook take advantage of the license that attends the *komos* to subject Cnemon, the disagreeable man who gives the play its name, to merciless ragging. In that case the cook, as well as the slave, had a personal grudge against the victim; we do not know that the cook of this play had a complaint against Smikrines, but he was no doubt recalled when it was known that far from there being no wedding there were to be two. What we see of him in the first act says that he would make a good assistant for the resourceful Daos in bullying Smikrines, who deserves much worse things than the not wholly disagreeable Cnemon.

We get very little from four fragments preserved in quotations. In one, the speaker says how unenviable are those who guard fortresses or citadels, since they are always afraid someone may steal up with a dagger. We cannot even be sure that this refers to the anxiety of Smikrines about the booty deposited in his house; nor can we find here a historical allusion precise enough to yield an indication of the date.³⁴

Many years ago it was suggested³⁵ that the Florentine Comedy might be one of the two comedies to which Menander gave the title *Epikleros*—*The Heiress*. Many of his works have two alternative titles; so the suggestion now made that this old guess may, after all, be right,

³⁴ See Del Corno, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) 224–25.

³⁵ By R. Herzog, *Hermes* 51 (1916) 315f.

is not impossible. However, none of the eight fragments printed in the Teubner edition coincides with the fairly extensive portion of the text we now have. There is, it is true, a fragment about hens cackling and a female person shooing them away;³⁶ and in Plautus' *Aulularia*, a play often stated, though on insufficient evidence,³⁷ to have a Menandrian original, a miser kills a cock so that its crowing will not betray the whereabouts of his treasure. Euclio, the miser in the *Aulularia*, resents even the smoke escaping from his house, and so, according to a late writer, does a Menandrian miser called Smikrines. It has therefore been suggested³⁸ that, since the smoke story seems to be told of both Euclio and Smikrines, accordingly the hen, or cock, story may be a second link between them. This argument amounts to very little, and the attempt to make out a *prima facie* case for regarding *The Heiress* as a second title of the *Shield* falls a long way short of success.

That this play is enjoyable is evident, I hope, even from the bald and unliterary presentation of it which I have offered. But in virtue of what qualities do we enjoy it? First and foremost, we enjoy it for its plot. It is easy enough to point out that this contains many of the regularly recurring elements found in plays of the New Comedy. It is based upon the ruse of a cunning slave, a feature which Plautus in his adaptations so much expanded and exaggerated; it contains two pairs of young lovers, and ends with a double wedding; it contains two elderly Athenians, one sympathetic and the other comparable with, though more distasteful than, the 'grouch' of the *Dyskolos*, the miser of the *Aulularia*, and the close-fisted father of the *Epitrepontes*; it contains the familiar cook and the not quite so familiar but well-attested comic doctor, in this case a bogus practitioner; one young man, like the hero of the *Sicyonian*, serves in Asia Minor; a slave in a farcical scene deluges the audience with quotations from

³⁶ Frs. 155–56 Koerte-Thierfelder (II p.64).

³⁷ Sandbach, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.31) 97–98, has done well to remind us that it is not certain that the *Aulularia* had a Menandrian original. If we did not know that the original of Terence's *Hecyra* was by Apollodorus of Carystus, people would no doubt argue from its resemblances to the *Epitrepontes* that its original must have been Menandrian. Since we have hardly any idea at all of the distinctive characteristics of other poets of the New Comedy, any argument that presupposes that we can isolate what is distinctively Menandrian starts under a disadvantage.

³⁸ By Gaiser, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 9–12. A. Borgogno, *RivFC* 98 (1970) 274f, is more cautious, and with reason.

tragedy,³⁹ a recognition scene has obvious affinities with such scenes in tragedy. But what matters most is the way in which these elements fit together in a unique and highly entertaining plot, centring upon the great stratagem of Daos. This plot's requirements determine the form which each standard element assumes in this play.

What kind of pleasure does this plot give us? At the beginning Daos is in the deepest despondency. His narrative of battle, recalling accounts of similar episodes in Xenophon, strikes a serious note; and the evident satisfaction of his hypocritical companion makes matters worse. But the divine speaker of the prologue does not allow our anxiety to last long. From her opening words, we learn what anyone familiar with the genre will have already guessed, that Kleostratos is not really dead; and when she has explained the situation, she tells us that we shall see Smikrines thoroughly discomfited. When he returns for his second talk with Daos, our knowledge of what is in store for him enables us to sit back without undue anxiety and enjoy the touches that display his meanness; and even the superb callousness of the cook and waiter leave us not indignant, but amused. Just so in the second act we can calmly notice the excessive quickness to despair of Chairestratos, who, sympathetic as he is, is characterised as *πικρὸς καὶ μελαγχολικός*, a manic depressive, and in contrast the loyalty and resourcefulness of Daos. The plotting scene—a standard type of scene in the New Comedy—displays the ruse of Daos in all its beautiful simplicity; and in the third act we see the beginning of its execution. In a realistic comedy Daos would hardly convey his distress and astonishment at his master's sudden affliction by uttering a series of quotations from tragedy, particularly since he aims to convince Smikrines that his brother really is on the point of death. But this is light comedy, and this particular scene, like many in Menander, is farcical. Smikrines is not only a miser but an ass, and in this scene his asininity is ruthlessly exposed. The exposure is continued in the scene with the pretended doctor; this person acutely notices that Smikrines, who thinks always of himself, is filled by the news of his brother's imminent demise with fear that the same thing might happen to him, and manages to make him believe that he himself shows dangerous symptoms. At that point our detailed knowledge of the plot ends, but even without the scraps of the last two acts which we possess, we

³⁹ Cf. *Epit.* 759–73, where Sandbach, *ProcCambPhilSoc* 193 (1967) 44f, has convincingly argued that the quoter is not Sophrone but Onesimos.

could easily have imagined the return of Kleostratos and the concluding double wedding. My chief regret is that we do not know what was done to Smikrines.

We are often told, very truly, that Euripidean tragedy had an important influence on the New Comedy. Anyone can see that Menander's plots owe much to those of Euripides; the standard motives of the exposed child, the arbitration, the recognition scene, for instance,⁴⁰ all come to him from this source. But when people go further and claim that the actual content of Menander's comedies has a tragic element, they are on dangerous ground.

First, the resemblance between certain scenes of Menander and tragic scenes to which they contain allusions is not reducible to mere imitation. The *Sicyonian* contains a long messenger speech,⁴¹ with more than one allusion to the famous messenger speech of Euripides' *Orestes*. That also describes how a debate in an assembly decided the fate of a man and a woman, and a distinguished scholar has described the Menandrian speech as being 'modelled' on the Euripidean.⁴² It seemed to me that the expression 'modelled' is calculated to obscure what is artistically the most important feature of the relationship between the two speeches. Not all of Menander's original audience will have taken the allusion. Those who missed it will not have been conscious of missing anything; they will have perceived a certain solemnity of tone, and will have sensed—if they were intelligent—

⁴⁰ R. Kannicht *ap. Gaiser, op.cit. (supra n.5)* 18, thinks the motive of Chairestratos' pretended death is taken from Euripides' *Helen*. Perhaps, but we can hardly be so specific; the motive of the hero's pretended death figures in Sophocles' *Electra*, where Orestes says that he knows many past instances (62f), and the belief that Odysseus is dead plays a part in a still older work, the *Odyssey*. Odysseus, it is true, did not contrive the rumour of his own death; but as Hartung saw, the case is none the less more relevant to that of Orestes than those of Zalmoxis and Pythagoras, which Jebb and Kaibel have preferred to dwell on.

⁴¹ 176f Kassel.

⁴² E. W. Handley, *BICS* 12 (1965) 42; I differed, *GRBS* 7 (1966) 141. At *Entretiens Hardt* 16 (1970) 23, Handley no longer uses the words 'modelled on', but singles out as especially important two effects of the Euripidean echo. It points, he says, to the analogy of situation between the slave and girl of the *Sicyonian* and the heroic *Electra* and *Orestes* of the tragedy; and it "does something to justify dramatically the long uninterrupted speech, by placing it in a tradition in which *Orestes* was a classic case . . ." He mentions also, as a subsidiary effect, that the echo gives the audience the pleasure of recognizing the allusion. What matters most is that the effect of the audience's pleasure in recognition, combined with the perception of the analogy and the "placing of the speech in a tradition," is a *humorous* effect. Sandbach, *op.cit. (supra n.31)* 133, has observed that only a minority of the first audience will have recognized it.

that it was not a solemnity to take wholly seriously. Those who did take the allusion will have seen that from the contrast between the heroic age and modern life, between a world prone to disaster and a world cushioned against it, the poet finds a gentle, ironic humour that will increase their pleasure. Just when the action of the play comes nearest to being serious, the more sophisticated hearers are reminded that this will not really happen; tragedy is present only at a distance, and the effect obtained is far from tragic.

Still less is Menander's comedy influenced by tragedy in the sense that it may border on tragedy, or have a tragic element. A good scholar has claimed that in the *Aspis* Menander has among his themes "the tragic accent of death" and that the report of Kleostratos' death "suffices to diffuse an air of tragedy through the first part of the play." "It matters little," he writes, "that the news—as we shall learn—is false."⁴³ On the contrary, it matters a great deal. The moment the opening scene between Daos and Smikrines is over, Tyche appears to speak her prologue. Her first words reassure the audience; Kleostratos is not dead, in case any person present was so naïf or so ignorant of the genre as to suppose he was. We know from the start that he will return and that his wicked uncle will get what he deserves, so that we can sit back comfortably and observe how the thing happens. Another good scholar writes, "The image that has imprinted itself most forcibly on my mind from this year's Menander is that of the three-day corpses bloated unrecognizable under the Mediterranean sun, and a bent and buckled shield."⁴⁴ To say that is to concentrate on a trivial part and to ignore the whole. The ancient audience knew that Kleostratos was safe, and could enjoy an entertainment whose whole tone was kept distinct from that of tragedy.

As always in Menander, the characterization is skilful; but it is noticeably less complicated than seems usual in this author. We meet here the most complete villain, and also the most loyal and intelligent slave, known to us from the specimens of the genre, in Greek and Latin, which we possess. From Chaireas we have a single speech belonging to a standard type, often uttered by the *jeunes premiers* of the New Comedy, claiming that the speaker is the most miserable person in the world. Chairestratos, with his constitutional pessimism, is a degree more unusual. Sympathetic as they are, he and his stepson do

⁴³ Del Corno, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12).

⁴⁴ W. G. Arnott, *University of Leeds Review* 13 (1970) 18.

not seem tremendously intelligent; here they are contrasted with Daos, who at one moment betrays his impatience with their mental slowness (353). Smikrines is skilfully portrayed; Menander has noticed that extreme selfishness, carried to a point where it outweighs the fear of strong public disapproval, often originates in resentment at supposed neglect. But even this portrayal scarcely goes deep; the plot does not require it. The characters are, as always in Menander, made carefully to fit the requirements of the plot; but as in tragedy according to Aristotle, the characters are there for the plot and not the plot for the characters. These characters are by no means such as to encourage those learned persons who talk as if a prime motive of Menander as a dramatist was to recommend the ethical doctrines of Peripatetic philosophy by exemplifying the theories of human character put forward by Menander's teacher, Theophrastus, and by his master, Aristotle.

The reader who knows Greek will derive continuous pleasure from the elegance, variety and aptness of Menander's language. In his contribution to the new Menander volume of the Fondation Hardt,⁴⁵ F. H. Sandbach has admirably shown how this poet adapts his language to each speaker and to each situation.

In the same volume (pp.71f), Walther Ludwig has made excellent remarks about the function of the gods in Menandrian comedy. He rightly argues that it is a convention of this genre that poetic justice is always done, and that it is done with the aid of the gods. As always, the Greek gods do not act by miraculous interference with the course of nature; they act through nature, and in particular through the minds of human beings.⁴⁶ This play, which has Fortune as its prologuizing divinity, is no exception. Tyche and τὸ αὐτόματον play a great part in Menander; but in his work neither means 'Chance'. τὸ αὐτόματον refers to things that happen by themselves, without deliberate human intervention;⁴⁷ notice the word 'human'. In some Hellenistic writers Tyche came to have the sense of blind chance; but in the classical age it normally means 'whatever happens'. In Sophocles' satyr-play *The*

⁴⁵ *Op.cit.* (*supra* n.31) 113f.

⁴⁶ See my book *The Justice of Zeus* (Sather Lectures 41, Berkeley 1971) *passim*.

⁴⁷ See Arist. *Phys.* II 197a36f, and *cf.* Plut. *De fato* 571E. In Aristotle's view *τύχη* is applied to the movements of rational animals, who act *κατὰ προαίρεσιν*, τὸ αὐτόματον to the movements of non-rational animals and of objects. Here, as often, Aristotelian usage coincides with that of ordinary language. See F. Solmsen, *Aristotle's System of the Physical World* (CornStCP 33, Ithaca 1960) 102-08.

Searchers a character invokes “Divine Tyche and guiding daimon”; the irrational element in human affairs was set down not to blind chance, but to the working, perhaps incomprehensible to man, of a divine agency.⁴⁸ In this respect Menander’s usage is classical.⁴⁹ Whether he himself in private life believed in poetic justice I do not know, for our only evidence comes from his plays; in these, the convention of poetic justice is regularly observed. The good are rewarded, the bad are punished; the young lovers marry, with a secure income, the greedy old man is ridiculed. This is not surprising, for the plays are quite distinct from philosophy, from tragedy, and from social criticism. They happen to be light comedies, with a decided element of farce.

Incomplete as it is, and despite what some people find this distressing lack of profundity, the *Aspis* seems to me one of the most attractive pieces of Menander among those lately recovered. So far, English translations of the new Menander have been undistinguished; no wonder, since despite his appearance of simplicity, he is not easy to translate.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD
April, 1971

⁴⁸ *Ichneutai* 50 Page, θεός τύχη καὶ δαίμον ἰθνητήριε; for the reading θεός, see E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus, Agamemnon* III (Oxford 1950) 675 n.2.

⁴⁹ Euripides frequently plays with the notion of Tyche as an independent and capricious power; see the material collected by Gerda Busch, *Untersuchungen zum Wesen der Tyche in den Tragödien des Euripides* (Diss. Heidelberg 1937). But even in Euripides the operations of Tyche are, at least on the conceptual level, set down to the will of the gods, a will that may be inscrutable to mortals. A. Spira, *Untersuchungen zum Deus ex machina bei Sophokles und Euripides* (Diss. Frankfurt, Kallmünz 1960), is relevant here; and see *The Justice of Zeus* (*supra* n.46) 144f.