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V.—On a Fragment of Greek Comedy Attributed to Menander

BY PROFESSOR FRANCIS G. ALLINSON

BROWN UNIVERSITY

THIS fragment of 87 lines (some of them much mutilated) is published, with an excellent commentary on many of the lines, but without translation, in the *Papiri greci e latini della Società Italiana* (P.S.I. II, 126). The authorship of Menander is there taken for granted. A. Körte also, in his interesting article (*N. Jahrb. f. klass. Alt.* XXXIX [1917]), entitled "Was verdankt die klassische Philologie den literarischen Papyrusfunden," calls it (p. 292, n. 1) "das schöne Fragment eines unbekanntes Stückes, aber sicherlich von Menander." R. Herzog, moreover, (*Herm.* LI) tries, not very convincingly, to show that it is from Menander's *Epiclesus*, an identification rejected by Körte.

This much of a consensus of opinion might lead readers to expect to find it included among the fragments of Menander in the L. C. L. edition, which purports to give all the more important fragments assigned, with reasonable certainty, to Menander. The reason for excluding this fragment, of very considerable length and interesting content, was, briefly, that there do not seem to be sufficient *indicia* to make the attribution to Menander more than a reasonable guess.¹ The *indicia* available are somewhat negative: (a) The vocabulary and style do not forbid us to assume Menandrian authorship (see, as a sample, the Greek text of lines 68–87 printed below). Much stress has been laid, specifically, on the occurrence of asyndeton. Menander, as is well known, freely made use of this device. But it would be risky to claim that Menander had a patent² on asyndeton. (b) The 'belated'

¹ The writer of the L. C. L. volume, however, would have considered it desirable to add this fragment in an appendix had not the exigencies of space prohibited.

² One may glean, for example, illustrations from Kock's *Comic Fragments*, opened almost at random: e.g. III, 296, Anaxippus, frag. 1, ll. 7 ff.; III, 317, Euphron, 1, 5–10, one conjunction only among six of 'The Seven Wise Cooks'!

prologue, spoken in this fragment by personified 'Chance,' recalls of course the *post mortem*, or rather the *post tonsuram*, prologue at the end of Act I in Menander's *Periceiomene*, spoken by 'Misapprehension' (*Ἀγνοία*). Professor C. H. Moore³ in his extended treatment, based on this part of our fragment, of the speakers of the prologue in tragedy and comedy brings out the wide range of selection from orthodox divinities, like Apollo, to mere *pro tempore* talking delegates, like Calligeneia in the second edition of the *Thesmophoriazusae* of Aristophanes. It would be interesting to have more data than we now possess, of the effect on the context of the transfer of the prologues from the beginning to some postponed position. Anyhow it is at least open to debate whether the occasionally somewhat wooden introductions in Euripides have any dramatic advantage over a postponed prologue, as in the *Periceiomene*, unless it be that they can be more quickly and successfully forgotten. A belated explanation of vital statistics in a novel, for example, may be more welcome than a genealogical tree of a character in whom, as yet, no interest has been awakened.

Incidentally, the fact that *Τύχη* does not name herself until the end of the very last line of the prologue seems⁴ to give us, in this rehearsal, the very last thing in the way of prologues!

Although it is not possible to outline the plot and its details, the parts preserved contain (as a glance at the translation below will make clear): (a) The considerable fragment of the belated prologue (ll. 1-20), discussed above; (b) An

³ See two articles in *Class Phil.* 11 (1916): (a) pp. 1-10, *Τύχη Προλογίζουσα*; and (b) p. 95, a brief but stimulating discussion of the fragment itself. Professor Moore, incidentally, in connection with the authorship, allows himself only the conservative statement that the style "suggests that it may have been by Menander."

⁴ Fortune, however, as my colleague, Professor K. K. Smith, suggests, may have been easily recognized by some conventional symbol at 'her' first appearance. If so, the postponement of the name to the last word entails only a mild suspense.

(incomplete) monologue (21-32) of the miserly Smicrines, which apparently deals with the expected arrival of valuables, plate, etc., belonging (?) to his brother Chaereas, now absent from home. When the text breaks off Smicrines is also expressing his disapproval of some marriage (doubtless an important item in the plot). (c) After a lacuna comes part of a scene (33-45), in which Davus (probably) is discussing, with some unidentified person, a plot to announce to Smicrines the sudden death of Chaereas, the feigned death being made plausible by a physician's certification. This is intended to exert pressure upon Smicrines in some matter, perhaps in reference to the marriage. (d) After the interlude of the 'Chorus' a new 'act' opens with another short monologue (47-54) by Smicrines, who is anticipating the actual possession of the valuables to be delivered by Davus and the slaves who are now approaching. (e) And finally (at line 55), Davus enters and delivers, as if alone, a preamble intended to puzzle and prepare the listening Smicrines.

Lines 60-68 are unfortunately so broken that their content must be partly inferred from what follows. Davus, however, soon (l. 63) allows himself to become aware of Smicrines and then enters upon the congenial task of irritating the miserly old man beyond the limits of endurance by a farrago of saws and citations, theatrically patched together from tragedy, as he leads up to the announcement of the faked death of the brother, Chaereas.

This part ⁵ of the fragment seems to the present writer to offer the most suggestive matter for comparison with Menander's methods as they have partially emerged from the longer fragments now restored to us. Yet the clue is, at the same time, elusive in our present state of half-knowledge. Is it in keeping, we may ask, with Menander's usual restraint, as we know it, to push any device so far? It would be precarious to answer in the negative, and to editors who would in-

⁵ As the Greek text of ll. 47-59 is practically intact, the Greek for ll. 60-87 only is appended below to a translation of the whole fragment.

ject more of the farcical elements into *The Girl from Samos*, for example, it would certainly not seem out of character.

Passing over, for a moment, the broken or vacant lines (60-69), the first citation fully preserved (70), made by the nagging slave, is verbatim from Aeschylus, *Niobe*, frag. 156; the interrupted sentiment, 73-75, is expressly attributed to Carcinus (a fragment not otherwise known); the continuation, "for in a day God makes the lucky luckless," is evidently a stock phrase from tragedy (see notes below); the citation in 82-83 is verbatim from the opening of the *Orestes* of Euripides; and finally, the climax, stamped, with mock solemnity, 'made by Euripides,' is (it seems probable to me, pending any more exact identification) an offhand rehash of the familiar tag appended, with variants, to five of the plays of Euripides. It would be entirely in keeping with the slave's burlesque solemnity to use this tragic 'tailpiece' as a last fling and to insist upon the canonical Euripidean provenance of a sentiment as neutral as the soup stock which the art of the cook may differentiate into mulligatawny or mockturtle.

To these actual citations we must prefix, in the broken lines (60-69), at least two or three more (the interruption by Smicrines, 72, shows that several have preceded) and these may be filled out by more or less hazardous guesses (see below, text and notes, for suggested supplements). The sheer luxuriance of this nagging, however amusing, verges on horseplay.

To take the passage from Menander which most obviously suggests itself for comparison, we find in the closing scene (as now preserved) of the *Epitrepontes* (910-914, p. 122 L. C. L.) the same device managed with far greater restraint.

There the old crone, Sophrona, appealed to by Smicrines, *in re* his sudden grandchild, says :

" 'Tis Nature willed it, unto whom no law's a bar,
And just for this was woman born."

SMICRINES•

What's that? You're daft?

SOPHRONA

From Auge I'll declaim a tragic speech entire,
If you don't sometime soon wake up, O Smicrines.

Here Menander, more subtly, contents himself with the one citation, followed up by a *threat* of more. The source is suggested by the casual mention of the title. He does not intrude on his intelligent audience the name of the writer, e.g., "This is by Carcinus, this by Euripides." But, without the context in this *P.S.I.* fragment, it would be rash to dogmatise about the net literary quality of the whole scene. Just because of its obviousness the didactic citing of an author by name might, on occasion, be more comic than the subtler allusion. Or again (as in the last *P.S.I.* citation), the fun may consist in attributing to Euripides what the audience is supposed to know perfectly well as a banal commonplace.

But then, as now, a skilful author would know his audience and steer a safe course between the didactic and too great allusiveness, just as we may resent the translation of a French or Latin phrase but feel irritated, for example, when Sir Edwin Arnold peppers us with untranslated Prakrit or Hindu words.

TRANSLATION OF LINES 1-87

(*The lines are numbered without regard to what preceded or to the lacunae. When the fragment begins Τύχη is completing the 'belated' prologue.*)

FORTUNE

• • • • •
1 [I think now that you ⁶] have all [the rest, but you must]

⁶ The supplements given in brackets, unless otherwise noted, are based upon conjectures made by the present transcriber or adopted or discussed in the admirable commentary of Signor Vitelli, the editor of *P.S.I.* II, 126, to which the reference is here made, both for these details and for the Greek text down to l. 59. The Greek itself for ll. 60-87 is given below.

know this. [He lives] in solitary wise (*μονότροπος* ⁷) with an old crone [as his only servant] but (here) where ⁸ I have entered . . . this miser's (*φιλαργύρου* ⁷) younger brother, a relative akin [as it happens] to the young man, very excellent in character and rich, dwells with his wife and is father of one maiden. [With him ⁹] the young fellow
 10 [left ¹⁰] his sister still young . . . the girls themselves have been reared [by themselves]. Now being, as I said before, an excellent man . . . [he is off ¹¹ on] . . . a journey away from home . . . dwells . . . absolutely was intending to settle the maiden (still) young in marriage . . . with his
 15 wife's son (begotten) by another husband [now dead ¹²] of course.

(*Lacuna of at least 10 lines*)

17 [For thus I will show] him up what sort of man he is . . . in regard to the capital sums.¹³ It remains to tell my name, who I am, mistress of all these things to arbitrate
 20 and regulate, namely, Fortune.¹⁴

(*Exit Prologue.*)

Scene —

SMICRINES

To prevent anyone from saying of me that I am very miserly I have readily allowed them to bring (things) in here without examining how much gold plate (or coin?) it is that one bears, nor even how much silver plate nor even exacting the enumeration from anyone. I say this, for people are wont to malign me in everything. For this minute accuracy (of mine) will be in evidence as long as it's house slaves who do the carrying. I think, indeed,

⁷ Signor Vitelli rejects the suggestion that either of these words formed the title.

⁸ Reading (not *σὸ*, but) *οὐ δ'* with De Stefani and Wilam.

⁹ Reading *παρ' ᾧ* with De Stefani. This, however, is rejected by Vitelli.

¹⁰ *κατέ[λιπεν]* Körte.

¹¹ *Exempli gratia.*

¹² *ἀποθανόντος* — rather long.

¹³ *τάρχαϊα*, as in Ar. *Nub.* 1156, Vitelli; but Wilam. reads [*νέεικε*] *ἐπὶ τάρχαϊα*, 'he is inclined to the good, old ways.'

¹⁴ *Τυχῆ* in Ms., as if dat.

that they will voluntarily abide by law and justice; but
 30 if they do not, no one is going to allow (them to steal).

But I wish to forbid them to carry out this marriage
 that is going on. Now perhaps it's an outlandish thing
 32 actually to say: "Not in marriage . . .

(*Lacuna of 2 or more leaves*)

32-34 (*nearly blank*)

DAVUS (?)

35 Now I have planned for him [to suffer] this, to die [some-
 how] by chance.

(A)

I shall see to it that you do not [get a flogging].¹⁵

DAVUS (?)

I, indeed, am letting myself¹⁶ go. So do you manfully
 look out for the affair.

(A)

Who is to be privy to it with us?

DAVUS (?)

We must tell the lady only and the (two) girls themselves
 40 to prevent their weeping, but must allow' the others in-
 doors to play drunken tricks on me on the supposition
 that . . .¹⁷

(A)

Right you are in what you say. Let some one lead in
 this one here.¹⁸ It is permitted(?)¹⁹ Of course the mal-
 ady is not going to admit of delay and agony [if . . . and
 45 if] the physician has some plausible²⁰ [pretext] for us.

(*Chorus*)

¹⁵ Reading $\mu\eta\ \delta[\alpha\rho\eta\varsigma]$ cited from Diels.

¹⁶ ἀφιεμ' not ἀφιημ' Vitelli.

¹⁷ . . . κ νερκόν Körte, κακόν Pistelli and Wilam.

¹⁸ "Un uomo di paglia" (metaphorically) representing the absent Chaereas (Vitelli).

¹⁹ A mark of interrogation, perhaps, gives sense.

²⁰ πιθανό[τητ]α σχῆ τινα suppl. Vitelli. "Also soll der Artzt eine praesen-
 table Todesursache erfinden," Wilam.

ACT —

Scene —. *Enter DAVUS (with companions)*

SMICRINES (*aside*)

47 Davus has come quickly indeed bringing to me a list of
the valuables and he has been very thoughtful for me.
50 Davus is with them. Well, by Zeus, he did do nobly. I
am well pleased to have a pretext in his case, so as to be
scrutinizing these things no longer altruistically, but con-
formably to my own interests. For of course the unde-
clared (valuables) are twice the amount. I know the arts
of this runaway!

DAVUS (*as if in monologue*)

55 O ye divinities! Frightful in truth, by Helius, is this
that has happened! I could never have supposed that a
human being would fall so quickly into such a calamity!
A regular blasting bolt has fallen upon the house.

SMICRINES (*aside*)

59 What in the world does he mean?

(*For supplements here made, merely by way of suggestion, to indicate the course of the dialogue in the broken lines 60-68, see notes on the Greek text below. At about line 63 Davus allows himself to become aware of Smicrines and proceeds to reduce him by literary compresses.*)

60-64 . . . (*unintelligible*). . . .

DAVUS

65 ["There is naught that comes to man apart from gods"]
66?

67 ["There is not a man who is fortunate in all respects."]

68 [For there is no possible device for anyone to continue]
69 unsmitten by trouble; [there is no resource in dexterous
70 bluffing], none in good counsel. And, you know, "God im-

plants guilt in mortals whenever he is fain utterly to destroy a household."

SMICRINES

[Why] do you string [so] many [irrational] maxims together, you triple wretch?

DAVUS

"There is no terror that is irrational—"

SMICRINES (*aside*)

Will he never call a halt?

DAVUS (*continuing, unchecked*)

75 — "nor even beyond belief, of all mortal ills," as Carcinus somewhere remarks. "For in a day's span God makes the lucky luckless." You shall have the whole story, Smicrines.

SMICRINES

Now what are you talking about?

DAVUS

Your brother — O Zeus, how shall I say it? — pretty nearly this: your brother is dead and gone, while wishing just now — here — to me —

SMICRINES

80 Why, what befell him?

DAVUS

Gall! Grief! A mind distraught! Suffocation!

SMICRINES

Gods and Poseidon, what a terrible thing to suffer!

DAVUS (*falling back on Euripides*)

“There is no tale so terrible to tell, no suffering, (nor—)”

SMICRINES (*interrupting*)

You make me tired!

DAVUS (*switching off from the Orestes*)

“For,” as I was about to say, “the deities decree mishaps past expectation.” *That’s* from Euripides! No mere
85 everyday writer invented that!

SMICRINES

But was some physician called in?

DAVUS (*answers by a sign*)²¹

SMICRINES (*continues*)

Well, well! Then Chaereas is gone! . . .

(*End of fragment.*)

TEXT OF LINES 60-87

60 and 61 are vacant.

62 *μονουβα* . . . *ν* [. .]

63 [. . .] *αρα*

64 [*ἄ*] *νθρωπον*

65 *οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδ*

66 *παρανευ*

67 “ [*οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις πάντ’ ἀνὴρ εὐδαιμονεῖ.*] ”

68 [*οὐκ ἔσθ’ ὅπως μενεῖ γὰρ ἄ*] *βλαβῆς πόνου*

69 [*εὐτραπελία*] *δ’ οὐ[κ]* *ἔστιν, οὐκ εὐβουλία.*

70 *καὶ δ[ῆ] “θε]ὸς μὲν αἰτίαν φύει βρότοιο*

ἔταν κακῶσαι δῶμα παμπήδην θέλη.”

²¹ And, probably, of assent. The *οὐδεις* of the Ms. would not only spoil the metre but would also be inconsistent with the plan indicated above in l. 45.

ΣΜΙΚΡΙΝΗΣ

[τί ἄλογα σὺ τ]όσα γνωμολογεῖς, τρισάθλιε;

ΔΑΟΣ

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλογον δεινόν

ΣΜΙΚΡΙΝΗΣ

οὐδὲ παύσεται;

ΔΑΟΣ

“οὐδ’ ἔστιν ἄπιστον τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις κακῶν,”
 75 [ὡς] Καρκίν[ο]ς πού φησ<ιν>· ἐν γὰρ ἡμέρᾳ
 τὸν εὐτυχ[ῆ] τίθη]σι δυστυχή θεός.”
 σὺ πάντα δ’ [εἶση, Σ]μικρίνη.

ΣΜΙΚΡΙΝΗΣ

λέγεις δὲ τί;

ΔΑΟΣ

ἀδελφός — ὦ Ζεῦ, πῶς φράσω; σχεδόν τι — σοῦ
 τέθνηκεν, ἐθέλων ἀρτίως ἐνταῦθ’ ἐμοί —

ΣΜΙΚΡΙΝΗΣ

80 τί παθῶν;

ΔΑΟΣ

χολή, λύπη τις, ἔκστασις φρενῶν,
 πνιγμός.

ΣΜΙΚΡΙΝΗΣ

Πόσειδον καὶ θεοί, δεινοῦ πάθους.

ΔΑΟΣ

“οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν δειν[όν] ὧδ’ εἰπεῖν ἔπος
 οὐδὲ πάθος —”

ΣΜΙΚΡΙΝΗΣ

ἀποκναίει[ς σ]ύ.

ΔΑΟΣ

“τὰς γὰρ συμφορὰς
 ἀπροσδοκίτους δαίμον[ες δι]ώρισαν.”
 85 Εὐριπίδου τοῦτ’ ἐστὶ. το[ύξε]υρημένο·
 οὐ τῶν τυχόντων.

ΣΜΙΚΡΙΝΗΣ

εἰσελήλυθ[εν] δέ τις

ιατρός;

ΔΑΟΣ

ΣΜΙΚΡΙΝΗΣ

οὔχεται μὲν οὖν ὁ Χαιρέας

(End of fragment.)

64 Probably part of a tragic citation. 65 If we may assume that the unintelligible syllables, παραρευ (?), in 66, mark either an interruption by Smicrines or Davus's own words, after a quotation in line 65, it would be possible to restore the line by one of the following citations from Euripides: (a) *Hec.* 805, οὐκ ἔστιν οἶδ[ἐν τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἴσον] or (b) *Thyest.* frag. 6, 398 Dindorf, which would also fit the letters, οὐκ ἔστιν οἶδ[ἐν χωρὶς ἀνθρώποις θεῶν]. 66 παραρευ T. Lodi, πάλιν εἰ M. Norsa. 67 This line, blank in the papyrus, is restored, *exempti gratia*, from a citation from Euripides imbedded in Pheidipp. Φιλιάδελφοι, frag. 18 K. III, 306. 68 οὐκ — το γάρ suppl. *exempti gratia*, to make a transition to 69. ἀ]βλαβής T. Lodi. 69 Suppl. (tentatively) Vitelli; εἰανδρία (2 letters short) Wilam. 70–71 Aesch. *Niobe*, frag. 156 (Vitelli). 72 τί ἄλογα ταῦτα Wilam. (before the letters οσα were reported); ἄλογα gives cue for ἄλογον in 73. 75 Carcinus citation not otherwise known. φησ' ἐν μῆ γὰρ ἡμέρα Ms., corr. Wilam. *metri causa*. Vitelli compares *Philem.* 213, 7 f. K. II, 534, for the thought; for both the sentiment and the use of ἐν ἡμέρα + μῆ ἡμέρα see also Menand. *Periceir.* 685 and 682 (p. 266 L. C. L.). 80 τί παθών; cf. *Od.* xxiv, 106. 82–83 From Eur. *Or.* 1–2. Note that δεινόν and πάθος weave in, as if by a cue, both words of the exclamation in 81. Cf. [ἄλογα] 72 with ἄλογον, 73. 83–84 τὰς—δι]ώρισαν. Of this hackneyed banality, triumphantly labelled by Davus as “made by Euripides,” Vitelli says: “Sono certamente parole di Euripide.” Possibly they are the exact words from some passage not yet identified. Pending any other identification, however, it may well be that Davus, switched off from his citation from the *Orestes*, chooses to bring his horseplay to a conclusion by a garbled citation, in trimeter, of the anapaestic tag appended to the end of the *Medea* (and four other plays). His vociferous claim (85–86) that this is ‘simon-pure’ Euripidean, not tacked on by any ordinary actor-fellows, might, conceivably, have amused a contemporary audience. The anapaests in question, *Medea*, 1416–1418, are:

πολλά δ' ἀέπτως κραινοῦσι θεοί·
καὶ τὰ δοκῆντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,
τῶν δ' ἀδοκῆτων πόρον ἦρε θεός.

The hackneyed sentiment about the shifts of Fortune is reiterated in each line. That ἀπροσδοκῆτους, unmanageable in the anapaests, displaces the

ἀδόκητος of the tag would give Davus little concern. For *κραίνουσι* we have the gnomic [δι]ώρισαν, twice employed by Sophocles in *O. T.* (the objection raised by Vitelli against the compound seems unnecessary). 87 *λατρός*: *οὐδέεις· οἴχεται μὲν οὖν ὁ Χαυρίας* Ms.; Körte disposes of the superfluous foot by reading *οἴχετ' οὖν ὁ X.* It seems best, with Vitelli, to omit *οὐδέεις*, and to assume that Davus replies only by a sign. It should also be emphasized (see above) that the insertion of the negative *οὐδέεις* would imply a contradiction to l. 45. This consideration, to the present writer, seems decisive as to the best method of curing the metre. The apparently otiose *μὲν*, eliminated by Körte's cure, would doubtless be taken care of by the context, now lost.