NEW PLAYS OF MENANDER

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THE most substantial contribution of the twentieth century to the study and appreciation of Greek literature has lain in its discovery of Greek papyri. The John Rylands Library has a notable collection of these treasures, which in miraculous manner have restored the very words of Greek writers often known only by repute and hearsay. Four texts in its collection are of Greek New Comedy. It is therefore fitting that Menander should come alive again in its precincts.

I have given as my title "New Plays of Menander", for I shall refer to two; and I can confidently predict that other plays than those of which I shall speak will shortly emerge. In 1938 Alfred Körte gave the world his third Teubner edition of the papyrus fragments; its second part, issued in 1954 and containing the book fragments, completed with sumptuous care by Andreas Thierfelder, might have seemed to close an era in Menandrean scholarship. Classical scholarship, however, whatever outsiders may think, is alive and on the move. The end of one chapter is the beginning of another. The work of Körte and Thierfelder is proving its worth as a sharp tool in the hands of those working on the new material.

I begin with a few words about a codex from Antinoopolis, which Dr. John Barns is to publish shortly in the second volume of The Antinoopolis Papyri. Nine pieces of fine parchment survive, written in a beautiful small hand of the fourth century. In one scene a slave, perhaps called Dromon, in a soliloquy wonders whether to take a risk in order to help forward his master's love affair. In another, master and slave discover a challenge (πρόκλησις) and a paper (γραμματείδιον) lying on the altar.

1 A lecture given in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 14th of January, 1959.
In a third, a character whose name is perhaps to be read Thras (a soldier?), learns that a girl has borne a child, and hears the name of a young man Moschion. There are fragments of drinking scenes, of a slave being scolded for helping his master's intrigues. Dr. Barns suggests in his publication that these scraps come from Menander's play *Misogýnhs, The Misogynist*. In default of the presence in the parchment of an attested ancient fragment—the closest approximation is the reputed γραµµατευδίον and the πρόκλησις (cf. Kö 278, 279)—his argument reassembles the fragments and testimonies, and shows how they could make a good Menandrean comedy. If this case has a weakness, it seems to me to be in the relatively minor role that is allotted to the *Misogynist*, the name-character of the comedy.

We would have liked to know more, for the *Misogynist* should be an excellent foil to the *Misanthrope*: which, as we know from the ancient Hypothesis, was an alternative title of the *Dyskolos*, the *Disagreeable or Irritable Man*. It is on this play that I propose to concentrate for the rest of this paper.

It, too, is a papyrus text, one of the treasures of M. Martin Bodmer, the noted Swiss bibliophile. The *editio princeps* was edited by Professor Victor Martin, Emeritus Professor of Greek in the University of Geneva, who should be remembered with honour in Manchester as co-editor of the second volume of the Catalogue of the John Rylands Papyri.

The papyrus itself is in codex form, and is complete in the sense that beginning and ending are marked, and no whole pages are missing. Tears at the ends or beginnings of lines, especially at the tops and bottoms of the pages, have caused a few passages to take on a patchy look. To judge from the handwriting, which can be studied in the admirable plates accompanying the edition, the text was copied between the middle and the end of the third century after Christ: the hand is a clear but not stylish capital, which slants markedly to the right. The scribe inserted a considerable number of punctuation marks and accents; added the names of characters at what he thought were their first entries

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or re-entries, thereafter marking alternation of speaker by double dot combined with paragraphus.

The scene is set in the countryside of Attica near the township of Phyle, forty miles north of Athens. To the spectator’s left is the house of Cnemon, the name-character. Some distance away, not really next door, and on the spectator’s right is the house of Gorgias, the Disagreeable Man’s stepson. He lives there with his mother, who has herself found Cnemon unbearable to live with. In the centre of the stage is a shrine of Pan and the Nymphs, no doubt a grotto, whose opening is placed between and perhaps a little further back than the houses. Pan himself comes out of the grotto, and explains matters:

"Imagine the place to be Phyle in Attica, and this shrine of the Nymphs, from which I have come out, to belong to the people of Phyle and such as can wrest a living from the rocks round here. It is a noted shrine. The land on my right is the home of Cnemon, a very unmannerly man, one disagreeable to all. He’s no lover of crowds—crowds! he’s lived an age and never in his life said a pleasant word: and never started a conversation, unless (neighbour of mine that he is) he has had to pass me: and he has thought better of that at once, I know. Well, in spite of these ways of his, he married a widow-woman just after her previous partner died, and left a little son behind: she was his sparring-partner by day, and most of the night too. They had an awful life: a baby daughter arrived—worse and worse. When things got so that they couldn’t go any further, and life turned hard and toilsome, the lady went back to the son of her former marriage. He has a little property quite close to here [the house on the left], which gives a poor livelihood to him, his mother, and one trusty servant of his father’s. He’s a young man now, with sense beyond his years—experience has been his tutor. The old man lives alone with his daughter and an old woman to wait on him; he gathers firewood, digs, and works without cease, and starting with his neighbours and his wife hates everyone from here right down to Cholargeis.

1 26, reading Eva. Any divergencies from the text of the Swiss edition are set out in Bull. Inst. Class. Studies, vol. vi (1959), and will not be further explained here.
The girl has turned out like her upbringing—not a bad notion in her head, a worshipper and careful minister to the Nymphs who wait on me. Her respect for us has won us over to take some care for her: and there's a young man, son of a very well-to-do father, owner of properties worth many talents, and a city dweller, who came out here with his huntsman—by chance I brought him to the spot and made him fall madly in love with her. There's the synopsis: if you want more, you will keep your eyes on the stage. It's high time, for I can see the young lover and his companion coming, deep in conversation."

This friend is the parasite in the play. He lives by playing up to his patron's whims. As recipient of Sostratus's confidences, he is drawing him out as the two approach: "Do you mean to tell me, Sostratus, you saw a free girl putting garlands on the Nymphs here, and fell in love with her instantly?" And when Sostratus says "Yes", he continues his teasing "You mean to say you intended to go out and fall in love with someone?"

The position is indeed serious enough; if the girl is free, that is, a citizen (not a slave or a hetaera), there can be no question of an intrigue. The penalties are great in case of discovery, for the law protects the womenfolk of citizens; and indeed their families give them little opportunity. Besides, she will be country-bred, unlikely to have a dowry. All of this Sostratus knows, but he is ready to marry the vision revealed to him, even on these terms, before he knows who she is. He has sent his huntsman Pyrrhias to find out about her and—a breach of manners this, as he realizes when he mentions it—to speak to her father or guardian. Why doesn't Pyrrhias come with an answer? At this very instant Pyrrhias arrives, out of breath, and quaking with fright. It is sometime before he can get out a coherent story: they are standing in front of a madman's house. When he knocked at the door earlier in order to carry out Sostratus's mission, an old woman referred him to her master. Pyrrhias approached with courteous enquiry—to be greeted with a "Villain, why are you on my land?" and a clod of earth aimed full in the face. When he could open his eyes again, the old man began to set about him with a stake, roaring "What business have you and I with
each other: don't you know the public road?" And as he ran, Cnemon picked up sods, stones, drew wild pears out of his bosom to pelt his quarry, Pyrrhias the huntsman! It was some two miles before the latter could shake him off. "I'll come back tomorrow to make further enquiries", is the parting shot of the parasite, as he makes himself scarce, leaving Sostratus and his huntsman engaged in mutual recrimination.

Cnemon is now heard in the distance. No doubt the huntsman Pyrrhias hides somewhere, not wishing to be recognized, and we turn to watch the misanthrope's entrance. The build-up for it is not let down: he is grumbling away—"What a lucky fellow the hero Perseus was on two counts: for one, he was airborne and didn't run into any of the crawlers on the ground; secondly, because he had a nice little object for turning nuisances into stone. I wish I had it. There would be a plethora of statues hereabout. But as it is, life's not worth living; chaps nowadays rush on to my land and chatter. I used to live by the roadside, then I gave up working all that part of my land because of the passers-by: but now they pursue me right up to the hilltops! What a crowd they are for breeding! Good-lord—here's another fellow standing at my door!" So threatening, is his behaviour that Sostratus makes the excuse that he was waiting there by arrangement to meet a friend. Cnemon bellows back—"If you want to meet anyone at my door, form them all up—build a seat, if you've any sense—why not a Parliament?"—enters the house and bangs the door. It looks like a dead end for Sostratus. He will go and consult his father's slave Getas, who may be able to give some advice. He is almost off the stage when the door opens and the girl of his dreams comes out: "What a trouble I'm in now" she says, "what shall I do? Nurse was drawing water and has dropped the bucket in the well." "Father Zeus, Healer Apollo, friendly Dioscuri, what irresistible beauty!" cries Sostratus. "My father as he went out told me to get him hot water", she continues. "If he finds out about it, he'll beat her black and blue." In her distress she appeals to the Nymphs; she would like to draw from their spring, but is ashamed in case there are other worshippers in the shrine.

1 l. 162, punctuate after ἡδη.
Sostratus appears, takes her pitcher and goes into the Nymphæum. While he is away, a door is heard opening, and the girl is frightened: "Is that my father coming out? He'll beat me if he catches me out of doors." But no—it is the other house door that opens and disgorges the slave Daos, still talking to someone inside. His words are interrupted by "Take this," "Give it to me"; no doubt the pitcher is being passed back to the girl. "What does that fellow want?", says Daos, instantly suspicious. "Goodbye, look after your father", breathes Sostratus—does he manage a squeeze, too?—and sighs on parting. "Stop moaning", orders Pyrrhias, emerging from hiding after making a very quick change (this actor may also have played the girl), "go and tell Getas all about it as you intended to". They leave the stage to Daos. "I don't like it", he soliloquizes. "It's bad, a young man helping a girl. Curse Cnemon for keeping an innocent girl unprotected in a lonely place like this." He'll forestall the young fellow by telling the girl's half brother Gorgias—and he waddles off to do so.

By the opening of the next act we learn that Gorgias has been warned. He takes the duties of relationship seriously. If her father won't look after the girl, he will not imitate such an example. Yet how can they convince the old man? While they talk Sostratus reappears. He hasn't been able to find his would-be confidante, Getas, who has been sent for by his mistress to sacrifice somewhere in the country: he will take his courage in both hands and try his luck again at the misanthrope's door. But Gorgias and Daos have been eyeing Sostratus with the utmost suspicion, and Gorgias now lets loose an impetuous tirade: "All men in my view, whether prosperous or not, come to a full stop like this and suffer a change; the prosperous man continues to find his affairs remain steady and prosperous for just so long as he can bear fortune and do no wrong: but when he gets to that, after being borne forward on a good tide, he takes a change for the worse." [We shall not find this lecture tedious when we remember that it is delivered with passion by a farm labourer of twenty to another boy of the same age, who is his social superior.] "Those who are less well-endowed, if they do no ill for all their poverty, but nobly bear their destiny,
come to trust that at long last they can look to a better portion—well?" [he can bear it no longer, but comes to the point]—"well, even if you are ever so rich, don't rely on riches, and again, don't despise us poor men: present yourself to view as worthy to stay prosperous!" Sostratus mildly protests—Gorgias won't be put off: "I think you're clearly guilty of a despicable scheme. You thought to seduce a free woman, and waited for an opportunity to perform a crime deserving many deaths." "It's not right", he goes on, "for your idleness to prove ruinous to us hard-working folk. Wrong a poor man and he's the most disagreeable of mortals: for he really does become an object of pity; and besides he takes his misfortunes as due to insult and not to his own failings." Gorgias has said his say—and the congratulations of his slave hinder still further Sostratus's protestations. But at last he can put his own position clearly: he loves the girl: he has come to find her father or relative, for he will take her as wife without a dowry: and if his intentions are dishonourable, he appeals to Pan to strike him dumb on the spot: indeed he is thoroughly upset that Gorgias should form such an opinion of him. How should Gorgias resist such a disclaimer, especially as Pan gives no sign? They are friends at once, and Gorgias reveals that the girl is his half-sister. But her father—Gorgias once heard him declare he would not marry him to any bridegroom less misanthropic than himself—which means never. It were better to give up the plan. "Heavens, man, have you never been in love?" is Sostratus's retort. "No, for I may not: I am stopped by calculation without respite of my ever-present troubles." But he will help his new friend, even over further difficulties: Cnemon hates the idle rich above his other hates. he will never allow one to come within speaking range. Let Sostratus take off his beautiful mantle or ἀλεσίς, spit on his hands and dig, then he will be able to speak to Cnemon and the girl during their daily walk. Such is the power of love that Sostratus agrees, picks up the mattock and submits to a churlish slave's directions. No doubt to an Athenian audience the spectacle of this fastidious young man splitting his back with toil was not the least of the play's

1 I. 300 is spoken by Daos to Getas.
happy touches. We see another in the entrance now of the slaves: they are a relief, they are comically ironic, and the strings of the plot tighten through their chatter. One we discover to be a cook coaxing a particularly recalcitrant sheep to the sacrifice, which they are to celebrate at the shrine: the other is that Getas of whom we have already heard.

We gather that Getas’s mistress (Sostratus’s mother), a superstitious lady, has dreamed that Pan was fastening shackles on her son’s feet, and then told him to put on his leather apron and dig a neighbour’s property. So Pan must be placated at his shrine. Sostratus’s mother and family (and we are left to infer, his father) are on the road. The act ends.

Act three begins with Cnemon just going out and giving strict instructions that his door is to be opened to no one. But he is brought up short by the sacrifice going on at the shrine: the music of a flute accompanies the rite. “The nymphs are bad neighbours”, he soliloquizes: “I shall move elsewhere.” He returns indoors. We hear the voice of Getas, “You say the boiling pan’s been forgotten? What’ll we do now? Bother the god’s neighbours, I suppose.” In a walk punctuated by the call “slaves” he innocently knocks on Cnemon’s door. We know what Cnemon will be like, Getas doesn’t. “Don’t bite me”, he begs, after recovering from his surprise. “I’ll eat you alive”, roars Cnemon. “Boiling pan? Do you think I sacrifice bulls or do what you are doing?” Getas stumps off, to be cursed roundly by the cook and given a lesson in manners. “I work for thousands of people in Athens. Sometimes I have to bother their neighbours, but I get utensils from all. You’ve got to flatter if you want anything. Suppose an old man answers the door, I call him ‘father’ or ‘dad’, ‘mother’ if it’s an old woman. If it’s an in-between, I say ‘president’ or ‘your reverence’; if it’s a servant, ‘Good sir’ I say.” But this familiarity with the ways of the world does not save Sicon when he knocks himself. Goaded to fury, Cnemon takes the

1 For a Greek a sacrifice brought a good meal, often indeed a party. Cnemon was unlikely to spend his money on roast beef.

2 See B.I.C.S. l.c. for the text of these lines.
whip to him, and shouts "I haven't got a pail or an axe or salt or vinegar or dittany or anything." Shortly after Sostratus reappears: "Anyone short of trouble let him come hunting to Phyle. Oh my bottom, my back, my heels,—I ache all over. I went at it like a young man of parts, lifting my mattock high and digging deep . . . thinking it well worth while against the time when the old man and girl would pass by. . . . And then Gorgias spied me, looking at me working up and down like pump-handles: 'I don't think he'll come now', he said, 'we'll try again tomorrow!'" Sostratus then spies Getas and learns of the sacrificing party; his mother has already arrived, his father is expected. Good—he will invite Gorgias, and goes off to do it. And now the well takes a hand again. Cnemon's door opens and the old woman attendant cries out: "Misery, misery, misery! I wanted to try to pull the bucket out of the well all by myself when the master was out of the way. I fastened a mattock on a rotten rope. It's just broken in my hands." Getas has little sympathy till he sees Cnemon coming up behind: "Fly, he'll murder you: or rather, stand up to him." "Where is the thief", roars Cnemon. "I didn't mean to drop it in", she whimpers. "Come inside, woman." "What will you do to me?" "I'll tie you up and let you down into the well." As he pushes her inside, Getas comments: "There's your true Attic peasant: he battles with rocks that bear no crop but thyme and sage-apple, knows pain, and gets no good of it." Sostratus (still in his digging clothes) goes on arguing with Gorgias, who is reluctant to accept his invitation.

We are not done with the well. It gets its biggest success at the opening of the fourth act. The old woman reappears: "Help, help! Master's in the well. He went down after the bucket and the mattock and slipped in." Her audience consists of the cook and is far from sympathetic. "Me go down the well?—to fight with a dog in a well, as in the fable." Fortunately for Cnemon, Gorgias hears the outcry: followed by Sostratus he rushes into the house. The cook holds the stage while we wonder what is going on inside: "There are Gods, 1 I. 507, keeping ὁρίσανον from fr. 671 Ko. 2 I. 578-9, reading βουλομένη . . . ἰδείκ αὐτή.
by Dionysus. You sacrilegious rogue, you grudged a boiling
pan when we were sacrificing: drink up your well so that you
needn’t give anyone water even.” He thanks the Nymphs:
“No one has ever hurt a cook and got away with it: our craft
has a touch of the liturgical.” His indignation against Cnemon
mounts: “If the old fellow is to be saved at all, let him be
crippled and lamed.” Sostratus returns and puts us out of our
suspense: Gorgias leaped into the well, he Sostratus—gilded
youth—could only stand at the top and tell the girl not to beat
her breasts, and when it was his job to haul up, he dropped the
rope three times with looking at his sweetheart and wanting to
kiss her. Supported by Gorgias, Cnemon now comes in,
dripping wet, much shaken: his folk throng around him, and
Myrrhine (Gorgias’s mother, Cnemon’s wife) comes too:
Sostratus hangs about at the back. This is Cnemon’s biggest
speech. In a long monologue of trochaic tetrameters he passes
his life in review. “I wanted to be self-sufficient (avTµepΚής)
and ask nothing of anyone. But now that I stare a bitter and
untended\(^1\) end of life in the face I see I decided wrong then.
A man\(^2\) should designate and admit to his confidence a friend to
stand by at any time. I was so far bemused as I scanned each
man’s life and his calculations of profit, that I thought none
would ever show any regard for any other. That was what
stood in my way! At long last Gorgias by himself\(^3\) has put it
to the test, with a most noble action. One who wouldn’t let
him approach his door, who never lifted a finger to help him
in any way, never spoke to him or addressed a pleasant word to
him—that’s the man he’s gladly saved, in spite of all. Where
anyone else\(^4\) would have justified himself by saying ‘You
won’t let me visit you—I won’t come to you. You’ve never
been any use to me:—I won’t be any use to you now. . . .’
Well now—if I die (and I feel bad) or if I survive, I adopt you
as my son [he addresses Gorgias]; consider all my possessions

\(^1\) 1. 715, reading ἀσκητὸν, suggested by T. B. L. Webster.

\(^2\) 1. 717, δεικτῷ νυμφαί δει καὶ παριεῖναι τὸν ἐπικουρήσωσον, δέι.

\(^3\) 1. 722 εἰς.

\(^4\) 1. 728-9 must at all costs be kept as part of Cnemon’s speech. Read 1.
727 ἄλλος καὶ καθικαίως (so O. Szemerényi), and treat ὅ daemon ἐστι . . . σοι νῦν
as quoted justification.
as yours; I entrust this girl to you, find a husband for her . . . you’re guardian of your sister, portion her off worthily and give her half my property as dowry . . . now, daughter, put me to bed: I think it unmanly to speak more than the minimum, but I’ll tell you a word about my life and character: if all men were just, there’d be no law courts, there’d be no haling of each other off to prison, there’d be no war, and everyone would be content with a competence. But perhaps you like it as it is: act thus anyhow; the vexatious old curmudgeon will soon be out of your way.” While the barriers are down in this moment of revelation, Cnemon knows to move our attention. How long will the conversion last? Gorgias acts at once: he accepts the injunctions placed on him. Now to find the right husband for the girl. Cnemon wearily shakes his head—he is not to be bothered any further. “But here’s a man on the spot.” “Not a suitor, surely?” asks Cnemon. “My fellow-rescuer!” As Sostratus steps forward [he is, you remember, still dressed as a farmer], Cnemon comments—“Sunburned and a farmer . . . not a loafer, or an idle fellow to stroll about all day”, and he gives his consent and goes inside. When Sostratus remarks that he is sure his own father will agree, Gorgias pronounces solemnly: “I betroth her to you in the sight of all these here: and justly, Sostratus, since you didn’t assume a character but came sincerely and ready to do anything to marry. For all your delicacy, you picked up a mattock, dug and laboured. That’s the role in which a man shows how to make himself another’s equal—when a rich man puts himself under a poor man’s orders.” The compliments and the lecture are brought to an end by the arrival of Sostratus’s father, Callipides, one of the richest men in Athens. Have they had breakfast yet? “Go and tell him all about us”, says Gorgias. “He’ll be better tempered after feeding”, says Sostratus, who goes inside with his father.

There is a whole act yet to pass, and our twentieth-century taste might regard the action as over. Not so the Greek. Sostratus must get his parents’ consent too; and he has a

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1 l. 743 [ἐλ δίκαιοι] shorter than [κινηρ εὖ]οι, but perhaps itself too long for the space.
further idea in his head. He will betroth his own sister to Gorgias and bring off a double event. Callipides proves surprisingly complaisant about the first request—he will accept Sostratus's chosen bride. But *two* poor kinsfolk—that's too much! Callipides is hardly prepared for the onset that follows: Sostratus has caught a taste for lecturing from Gorgias, and now delivers one to his father on the instability of wealth compared with the assets of friendship. It caught the fancy of the ancients and in Stobaeus's extract has rung down the ages. Callipides has no wish to stand up to such a tirade: "What I have amassed I don't want buried with me. It's all yours. Do you want to make a friend?—Try him and do it, and may good luck attend you! But don't preach to me!" But when they call Gorgias in, they find he has been listening at the door; his independent pride forbids him to resign himself to enjoyment of an unearned income, and it takes Callipides's bluntness—"You're a fool, though an honourable fool" to make him change his mind. We are reminded that, after Cnemon's recognition of him as son, Gorgias is no longer a poor man: and to the general amazement he can cap Callipides's offer of three talents dowry with a talent to endow Sostratus's bride. Details of the double betrothal settled, the wedding arrangements are set in motion: good wine, an all-night festival (*πανυχίσ*), guests. Sostratus introduces the ladies from Cnemon's house to his mother, probably in the shrine of the Nymphs. But Cnemon himself won't come. "He begged us to take the Old Woman so that he might be quite alone." The old woman herself joins in, and adds her mite of pity: "You'll lie here alone, poor wretch, prisoner of your character"; and in a moment, when the festivities begin and the sound of a flute is heard, she suggests that someone else should sit with him. The slave Getas takes up the idea—he will "look after" (*θεραπειώ*) Cnemon all right! He is joined by the cook Sicon, and together they plan to tease the old man, left to their tender mercies. The last section of the play—a hundred lines of mocking iambic tetrameters—constitutes a sort of ballet or harlequinade, the "ragging of Cnemon". The plan is worked out by the fertile brain of the cook. He and Getas will together drag out Cnemon in his bed (for he cannot get up
unaided), and dance round him. A festal rhythm is tapped out by the cook:

\[ \text{παί παιδιν, παιδές καλοί, παί παιδές: οίγους' οίμοι} \]

"Me lads, me lads, boys, boysie boys, me lads", "Now I'm a goner." To this mocking jingle they encircle him as he lies helpless in mid-stage. They pretend to knock at his door, and ask for boiling-pans, sage-apple, seven tripods, twelve tables, nine rugs, hundred-foot curtains. They mimic his responses, make him call out for his old attendant and curse her absence. "You shun a crowd, hate women, won't allow yourself to be carried to join the sacrificers. You must bear it. No one will come to help you." They force him to listen to a running commentary on the festivities, the drinking, the dancing; and they bid him dance too. Only, it seems, when they get their way and he teeters a few steps across the stage do they relent and carry him back indoors. Then they themselves take their wreaths and torches to join in the merriment, while one steps forward to wind up the play with what must be Menander's seal or sphragis: "May Victory, laughter-loving daughter of a famous father, always smile on us!"

As we learn from the argument prefixed to the text, this prayer was granted. The play won first prize at the Lenaean festival when it was presented. And surely it is a winner! Its gallery of characters, unity and speed of dramatic movement, wealth of comic invention, elegance yet simplicity of its dialogue, show a vigorous and resourceful playwright. On the stage it could hardly fail to be a roaring success.

The scholar will of course have a special interest in comparing it with the surviving fragments of the other plays, and revising his views both of them, and of the relationship of Plautus and Terence to Menander. First for its formal elements. The length of this first play of Menander to be known complete is a little more than 970 verses. The division into five Acts is clearly marked by the heading XOPOY—the points at which

1 These two verses (fr. 616 Kock), were assigned to the Epitrepontes by Wilamowitz. Since they are also found as the concluding couplet of an unpublished fragment of papyrus from Oxyrhynchus, the colophon of which carries the title Μενανδροποτ Οψέως (an unknown play), it seems probable that Menander always made use of them to conclude his plays and put his own stamp on them.
interludes are sung by a chorus of tipsy revellers. This chorus is introduced at the end of the first act in the very same words as at the corresponding point (1.34) of the Epitrepontes——so conventionalized has this division become. Similarly conventionalized is the ending of the play ἕδε ἐνάπετεω κτλ. The Act divisions occur at lines 232, 436, 619, 783: the first Act is noticeably longer than the rest, the fourth noticeably shorter (164 verses): the most interesting surprise is the length of the last Act. As I have already noted, it adds little to the dramatic action, which was almost finished by the close of Act IV. This point is of material significance in the discussion of the surviving fragments of the Samia and seems to support Gomme's contention that they begin with Act II, not Act III (as Webster, Körte) or IV (Wilamowitz). The context of something like eighty lines of trochaic tetrameters and a hundred lines of iambic tetrameters (not so far recorded in Menander's verse) is also a point that calls for study. No doubt the "ballet" of the last Act has traditional elements in it. One remembers the ἰσος γάμος of the Old Comedy, the mockery of Lamachus in the Acharnians, the dancing exit of the Wasps. If our knowledge of Middle Comedy were greater, we might find such a scene to be a common closing formula. Other stock elements can be given their parallels from Middle Comedy: the cook who enters with a sheep round his neck, the parasite, even the well.

Another formal element that calls for study in detail is the prologue. It is an opening speech, not delayed till after a preliminary scene; since the events of the play are simple, there is no tangled skein of intrigue to unravel, and the chief attention is directed to the psychology of the characters, so that we recognize them at once, and build up an anticipatory picture. There is no need for the speaker to prophesy what is to happen. Since he is a God, Pan, he could, of course, do so. Miss Photiades has emphasized his divinity in her article, and claims that his intervention is to be taken in earnest: Pan is punishing Cnemon for neglect of his cult, and his role is as active as that of Aphrodite in Euripides's Hippolytus. This interpretation misreads the play. No precise instance of neglect of cult can be laid at Cnemon's door: his offence lies in his disposition, his τρόπος,
offensive equally to gods and men. The reason why the old woman deserts him at the last, and one of the charges brought by the slaves, is that he won't join his fellow-men in sacrifice, a sacrifice that is followed by a party. Pan does not instance any failure in Cnemon's attitude to himself that is not equally a failure towards the rest of mankind. Pan helps in the discomfiture of the Old Curmudgeon: but his fate is hardly a divine punishment.

In an anecdote told by Plutarch, *De Gloria Ath.* 4, Menander is made to reply to a friend who asked why he hadn't written his new play when the date for production was not far off: "I have finished it. The management of the plot is done. All that remains is to write the lines." Professor Martin quoting this anecdote has rightly called attention to the poet's distinction between management and words. The excellency of its management, its *economy* (*oikonomia*) is the overmastering impression given by a reading of the *Dyskolos*. "Management" means more than plot construction. The plot of the play could be described simply as "how the hero persuaded the father of the girl he loved to let him marry her by rescuing him from a well". "Management" implies the combination of character and incident to provide dramatic impetus that makes the action move forward. It is possible to isolate some elements of technique. One is variety: the action is spread over two or more simultaneous fields (the party engaged in sacrifice in front of the Nymphaeum, Sostratus quietly digging). We thus enjoy the different reactions of the participants to what is going on, and these reactions themselves set the next stage in motion. Another element is careful preparation: the audience's ideas and emotions are played on in advance. In the third line of the prologue, the Nymphaeum of Phyle is described as "a shrine of note". This is not merely an interesting fact, it is preparation for the presence of the whole of Sostratus's family at sacrifice in this out of the way spot. An admirable crescendo leads to the first entry of the Old Curmudgeon; an even better one is found in the role played by the well. Instead of Cnemon's fall into it being a *deus ex machina* to bring the story to a happy end, it seems the most natural thing in the world. Another element
(and this is against the anecdote) is the language itself: not only is it simple yet elegant,¹ it is always dramatically pointed, dramatically rhetorical. No restoration here or elsewhere in Menander that fails to meet these criteria can be acceptable.

Another feature of the plot will already have presented itself forcibly, because of its contrast with other known plays: not only is its construction simple, it is almost aggressively moral. Here are no complicated situations of recognition, no long lost children born in dubious circumstances, no rapes presented as if they were every-day occurrences. The play need cause no lifting of eyebrows in a girls' school. Its treatment, moreover, illustrates admirably the restrictive effect of social conditions on the choice of topics for the stage. The heroine of this moral story is not even given a name—she is simply "the girl"—and she has no personality. She is the beauty, X; she could be the most vacuous of film stars and the play would not suffer. In contrast, therefore, to many plays, there are no improbable intrigues in regard to which we are asked to suspend disbelief. There is this much of improbability even in this plot, that we must believe a fastidious town-bred youth would be ready to accept as wife an entirely uneducated country girl. Of course in a society where the wives and daughters of citizens are closely chaperoned, and the only young ladies whom men can meet easily must belong to the demi-monde, one can hardly expect a young girl to make a satisfactory stage heroine.

If the play has a moral lesson, it lies in its preaching to the rich, the idle, the townspeople not to trample on the rights and feelings of the poor, hardworking country folk. It is done directly by exhortation in the mouth of Gorgias; still better is it suggested by the assumption of workman's togs by Sostratus in order to win his bride. Old Cnemon himself (not a poor man at all, for his property is worth two talents at least) has a bias in favour of the peasant proprietor, the ἀντουργός; and even Callipides is represented by his son as an ideal farmer.

Perhaps social strains lie behind this. The feeling of class

¹ This is true in spite of the mannerism by which connecting particles (especially δὲ and γὰρ) are postponed in sentence openings.
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division perhaps reflects the loss of citizenship in 321 B.C. by some nine thousand thetes \(^1\) many of whom might well be farmers. Now the extract from the Didascalia quoted in the argument to the play gives the date of production as the archonship of Didymogenes—an archon who does not exist. It is suggested that Didymogenes is a mistake for Demogenes, who was archon in 317/16, at a time when Menander was in his twenty-sixth year. The correction fails to carry absolute conviction, since Didymogenes is a known name, and the archon list contemporary with Menander's later years has not been irreproachably reconstructed. 317 B.C., however is the year which saw Demetrius of Phalerum installed as governor of Athens, and certain passages would gain in force if interpreted as hits against his government. \(^2\) If the date is right, one will be tempted to look for characteristics of Menander's early work in the play. Possibly the relative simplicity of construction, the prominence of fooling should be considered such.

But there is no obvious sign of immaturity in the play. \(^3\) It has the exuberance of interest found in all works of artistic creation. Yet no doubt its author's chief aim was to portray an irritable, quarrelsome, tiresome old man—τὸν ἄργωδῃ γέρουσα, as he is characterized in the Epilogue. The effect of his unsociability on others is an integral part of that portrayal, so that in a sense the play is a study of social interdependence. At the base of Cnemon's twisted character lies an honourable if mistaken view of politics and morals. Men, it seemed to him, were so

\(^1\) See Plutarch Phocion 28.7, Diodorus 18,18.5. The number of citizens was reduced to 9000. Either 12,000 (Plutarch) or 21,000 (Diodorus) were disfranchised (see on these figures, A. H. M. Jones, Athenian Democracy p. 76 and 149 n. 3).

\(^2\) So L. A. Post regards I. 755 οὐ τριφάντι κοῦ ντι ὁδὸν ἄργωδῃ πρεπεταίνῃ τῆν ἕμεραν as a smack at the Peripatos and at Demetrius, and I. 836-7 οὐκ έχειν βούλει δικεῖν [εγεῦ] as a reflection on his sumptuary legislation. A. Momigliano suggests that Menander's choice of theme and treatment in this moral play were officially inspired by Demetrius's policy of morality.

\(^3\) Dyskolos has neither the quantity (186 out of 341 verses in Samia, on Körte's count) nor the awkwardness of the monologues in the Samia. Was E. Diehl after all right in suggesting that the Samia preserves 'Ὀψυχή' cf. Samia 168, 197. Four Menandrean comedies have double titles. 'Ὀψυχή' ἡ Σαμία would be thinkable.
little admirable in their dealings with each other that self-sufficiency became an ideal. It is a moving revelation that excites our sympathy, and was no doubt intended to do so: it is due to Menander’s wit that it was not also sentimentalized.