

MARC HUYS

P.OXY. LIII 3705: A LINE FROM MENANDER'S 'PERICEIROMENE' WITH  
MUSICAL NOTATION

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## P.OXY. LIII 3705: A LINE FROM MENANDER'S 'PERICEIROMENE' WITH MUSICAL NOTATION<sup>1</sup>

P.Oxy. 3705, first edited by M.W. Haslam and exhaustively discussed by A. Bélis<sup>2</sup>, contains part of a iambic trimeter, three times repeated and provided with alternative musical settings. The editor dated it to the third century A.D. His transcription runs as follows:

1	$\overset{\cdot}{\bar{V}} \quad \overset{\cdot}{Z} \quad \overset{\cdot}{I} \quad \overset{\cdot}{I} \quad \overset{\cdot}{Z} \quad \overset{\cdot}{M} [$ του δὴ τόπου τι μνη[η
2	$\overline{MV} \quad \overline{ZI} \quad \overline{MZ} \quad \overline{IE} \quad \overline{OI} \quad \overline{\Xi} [$ του δὴ τόπου τι μνη[η
3	$M \quad P \quad M \quad \bar{\bar{O}} \quad P \quad C [$ του δὴ τόπου τι μνη[η
4	$MV \quad \overline{VZ} \quad \overline{ZV} \quad \overline{V\Xi} \quad \overline{\Xi I} \quad \overline{I} [$ $\cdot \quad \cdot \quad \cdot \quad \cdot \quad \cdot$

There is little doubt that this line is to be identified with Menander, Pk. 796, where Pataecus asks Glycera: τοῦ δὴ τόπου τί μνημόνευμά σοι λέγει; ("Which means of recognizing this place did she report to you?")<sup>3</sup>. Until now this trimeter was known only from the parchment codex P.Lips. 613 (Pack<sup>2</sup> 1303)<sup>4</sup>, also dated to the third century A.D., where it ran τουδητ[... ]υτι[... ]ημονευμασοιλεγει; it was correctly restored by A. Körte. The line preceding l. 1 in our fragment possibly corresponds with Pk. 795 (Glycera: γυνή μ' ἔθρεψεν, ἢ τότ' εἶδε κειμένην), although the traces visible on the photograph published in the Oxyrhynchus-series are not clear enough to permit identification. If this were the case then the horizontal stroke above the first musical sign of l.1, naturally interpreted by Haslam and Bélis as a *diseme* marking the length of the syllable beneath it, might be a paragraphos which would then mark the change of speaker from Glycera to Pataecus. In another dramatic papyrus with musical notation (P.Oxy. XLIV 3161; TrGF II ad. F 684) we find just one paragraphos (fr. 2.15-16) as well as several *disemes*, the only difference

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to A. Wouters and O. Bouquiaux-Simon for helpful comments on this paper. My thanks are also due to K. Lee from the University of Sydney for improving considerably the quality of my English.

<sup>2</sup> M.W. HASLAM, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, LIII (1986), p. 47-48, pl. II; A. BÉLIS, *Interprétation du Pap. Oxy. 3705* in: ZPE 72 (1988), p. 53-63. Haslam reacted to this paper with *On P.Oxy. 3705: A Classification* in: ZPE 75 (1988), p. 139-140. The fragment is also treated in the list of musical documents recently published by M.L. WEST, *Ancient Greek Music*, Oxford, 1992, p. 282, 324 (nr. 48).

<sup>3</sup> The identification was made with the help of the computerized T.L.G. (University of California, Irvine) and of the programme Pandora 2.5. This verse of Menander was the only place on the CD ROM containing the sequence of letters του δη τοπου τι.

<sup>4</sup> A. KÖRTE, *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-historische Klasse LX* (1908), p. 145-175.

between the two signs being that the paragraphos is slightly longer. The problem with the *diseme*-interpretation in our fragment is that it would be the only place in the whole fragment where this rhythmical symbol is used. Bélis herself considered this an irregularity<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand the use of the *diseme* is quite inconsistent in other musical fragments as well<sup>6</sup>.

This is the first fragment from New Comedy with musical notation, but we already have some examples of tragic and probably satyric iambic trimeters set to music (P.Oslo inv. 1413 fr. a 15-19, f-m [Pack<sup>2</sup> 1706, TrGF II ad. F 680 b, c], P.Mich.inv. 2958 [Pack<sup>2</sup> 2442, TrGF II ad. F 682], and possibly P.Oxy. 2436 [Pack<sup>2</sup> 2440, TrGF II ad. F 681]). They all date from the first or second century A.D.: by this time it seems to have become common practice for dramatic performers to set dramatic excerpts, including iambic speeches, to music, a practice which certainly deviates from the authors' intentions<sup>7</sup>. At first sight it may seem surprising that this practice was also applied to a Menandrian dialogue.

Therefore one is tempted to avoid this conclusion by resorting to the hypothesis that Menander borrowed this line entirely, or at least up to and including *μνημόνευμα*, from a lost, most probably Euripidean, tragedy, and that the music was composed for the tragic original, not for the comic parody. The line in question belongs to the recognition scene of the 'Periceiomene', where Pataecus is reunited with his daughter Glycera, a scene whose style and diction are manifestly tragic and which may even parody one or more Euripidean recognition scenes<sup>8</sup>. Some expressions have certainly been inspired by Euripides, e.g. *ἐχωρίσθητ' ἀπ' ἀλλήλων δίχα* (l.788) by 'Melanippe Sophe' fr. 484.3 N<sup>2</sup>. Note also that the term *μνημόνευμα* is nowhere attested in comedy, but once in tragedy (cf. TrGF I 97 Moschion F 6, 33) in the same metrical position<sup>9</sup>. So we cannot altogether rule out the possibility that l.796 was originally tragic, but the hypothesis is quite shaky. For Menander generally imitates tragic style in a more subtle way than by simply adopting trimeters from tragedy, except for some full quotations which have a special emotional significance<sup>10</sup>, something not needed here: Pataecus only wants quick and factual information, and the other tragic reminiscences in this dialogue do not have the character of real quotations.

This theoretical possibility being rejected, there remains the temptation to consider this fragment as an exceptional case: the four variations may in fact suggest an experiment or a melographic exercise devised by a music teacher, as was suggested by Bélis<sup>11</sup>. This suggestion may be supported by the unusual material nature of the scrap: the editor informs us that it was

<sup>5</sup> Cf. BÉLIS, o.c., p. 58.

<sup>6</sup> See for example R.P. WINNINGTON-INGRAM, *Fragments of Unknown Greek Tragic Texts with Musical Notation II. The Music in:* SO 31 (1955), p. 35-36, 40-41; M.W. HASLAM, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 44 (1976), p. 71-72 (on nr. 3162).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. WEST, o.c., p. 311, 377-378.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A.W. GOMME, F.H. SANDBACH, *Menander. A Commentary*, Oxford, 1973, p.520; A.G. KATSOURIS, *Tragic Patterns in Menander*, Athens, 1975, p.128-129; R.L. HUNTER, *The New Comedy of Greece and Rome*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 133-134; A. HURST, *Ménandre et la tragédie in:* E. HANDLEY, A. HURST (edd.), *Relire Ménandre*, Genève, 1990, p. 115.

<sup>9</sup> Already GOMME, SANDBACH, o.c., p. 522 remarked that the word may have had tragic associations.

<sup>10</sup> Menander quotes complete Euripidean trimeters in Sam. 325-326 (= Oidipous fr. 722 Mette); Scut. 407 (= fr. 661 N<sup>2</sup>), 424 (= Or. 1) and 432 (= Or. 232): this passage in the 'Aspis' strings together tragic quotations in a bombastic, pseudo-emotional style, which differs widely from the recognition-stichomythia of the 'Periceiomene': here the tone is serious and tense, but not bombastic.

<sup>11</sup> BÉLIS, o.c., p. 59-63.

written *transversa charta*, since the lines run along the length of a κόλλημα-joint and in the direction of the fibres. This rare situation occurred when a roll which had been used normally with a document written along the fibres was turned 90 degrees and re-used on its back, and is attested for some para-literary, but not, as far as I know, for literary texts<sup>12</sup>. But the material and formal features of *chartae musicae* differ widely from those of ordinary literary papyri, and there are some other examples of such texts written on the back of an already used papyrus<sup>13</sup>.

There is no convincing argument, then, against the assumption that this fragment gives evidence of a practice of setting selections of Menandrian dialogue to music. The existence of such a practice from Hellenistic times onwards was previously postulated by B. Gentili<sup>14</sup> on the analogy of the above-mentioned musical performance of tragic trimeters. He found support for this theory in the inscription of the Delphic Sotèria (first half of the 3rd century B.C.), which mentions alongside the τραγωδοί, i.e. virtuoso actors and singers who performed any selection of tragic texts with musical accompaniment, also troupes of κωμωδοί, flute-players and διδάσκαλοι: since a separate flute-player is mentioned for the comic chorus, these flute-players must have provided the musical accompaniment for the song of the κωμωδοί. Further he suggested that the musical character of Roman comedy - think of the numerous Plautine *cantica* - derived from the contemporary theatrical practice of Greek New Comedy. Especially interesting in this respect is a Roman adaptation by Caecilius Statius of a passage from Menander's Πλόκιον quoted by Aulus Gellius 2.23.9-10: whereas the Latin fragment (C.R.F., ed.O. Ribbeck, 142-157) is a polymetric lyric, the corresponding Greek verses (fr. 333 K.-Th.) are in iambic trimeters. Finally, Gentili pointed to pictorial art in Hellenistic and Roman times, which reflects the public's strong liking for performances with song and dance, in particular of Menander's plays. So our papyrus fragment might be part of a copy used by such a κωμωδός, with several possibilities from which he could choose for the performance. And if it was a music teacher's copy, his choice of a comic trimeter was probably no mere caprice, but well grounded in contemporary practice.

Leuven

Marc Huys

<sup>12</sup> See the examples in E.G. TURNER, *The Terms Recto and Verso. The Anatomy of the Papyrus Roll* in: *Actes du XV<sup>e</sup> congrès international de papyrologie I (Papyrologica Bruxellensia 16)*, Bruxelles, 1978, p. 51. The practice occurred in some para-literary texts of the Dioscorus of Aphroditon papyri (6th cent. A.D.): P.Hamb. II 166 (= Pack<sup>2</sup> 356 and 2165), on which a grammatical text with the conjugation of ποιέω is written along the fibres and at right angles to the long axis of the roll on the back of a document; P.Lit.Lond. 188 (= Pack<sup>2</sup> 351), a Greek-Coptic glossary (ed.pr. by H.I. BELL, W.E. CRUM in *Aegyptus* 6 [1925], p. 177-226) with the same material features. As was suggested by the editor of the Hamburg-papyrus (*Griechische Papyri der Hamburger Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek...*, Hamburg, 1954, p. 115), this kind of texts may have been copied to be hung at a wall for didactic purposes (but see the doubt expressed by H.I. BELL in *CR*, 6 [1956], p. 115), a practice easily imaginable for both the ποιέω-paradigm and our musical fragment.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. E. PÖHLMANN, *Die Notenschrift in der Überlieferung der griechischen Bühnenmusik* in: *WJA N.F.* 2 (1976), p. 70.

<sup>14</sup> B. GENTILI, *Lo spettacolo nel mondo antico. Teatro ellenistico e teatro Romano arcaico*, Bari, 1977, p. 13-39 (= *Theatrical Performances in the Ancient World. Hellenistic and Early Roman Theatre*, Amsterdam/Uithoorn, 1979, p. 22-45).