Techniques of foreshadowing and character presentation in Menander's *Aspis* in the light of Greek dramatic tradition

Martin Ciesko

Watching a new play

Aspis is one of the few plays by Menander whose fully preserved exposition we can follow in detail.[1] Due to its interesting plot complications and a self-conscious intrigue, we get a glimpse of how the play interacts with the audience's very concept of the genre and what its aesthetic effect is. This is still not enough to redeem the play for some critics: despite a few effective scenes, Sandbach and others do not rank it among Menander's dramatically most accomplished plays. They blame implausibly black-and-white character portrayals[2] and the problem that 'the action of the play is not at all points perfectly fitted to the personages.'[3]

Within its framework, the play explicitly addresses questions that in plays that are dramatically more successful do not get such a prominent mention. These questions are nevertheless important because they concern the transactions between the playwright and his audience. The situation - especially, but not only - at the opening of *Aspis*, raises interesting questions about the role of the spectators' participation in deciphering and assessing both the evolving plot and its character types in a comedy of peculiar ambiguity. The ambiguity is created by bringing on stage something positively new, but at the same time recognizable as generically comic. Moreover, the admixture of a number of stock motifs that belong to the tragic genre and the explicitly acknowledged element of tragedy give the play an almost unique dimension. This is considered Menander's most self-referential play[4] that constantly alludes to the process of creating a comedy that should conform to generic rules, by exposing to full view questions about scripting a tragic play within a comic play. To assess some of the techniques of foreshadowing, character presentation, and self-referentiality, we must suppose an audience that is aware of comedy's generic working methods and of the canonical Greek dramatic tradition.

First, let us look at the situation the spectators are confronted with at the beginning of the play, and then move on to discuss their awareness of the genre and see how the play conforms to their expectations or seems to frustrate them. Later I shall

return to the element of self-reflexiveness in the communication with the audience, that is, I shall claim, inherent in the genre.[5]

First Frame: spectacle and hints

Plaut. *Pseudolus* explicitly states the importance of bringing always something new on stage: *qui in scaenam prouenit, / nouo modo nouom aliquid inuentum adferre addecet; / si id facere nequeat, det locum illi qui queat.* (Plaut. *Ps*. 568ff.)[6]

A Greek spectator who sat down in a *theatron* to watch a play by Menander could not foresee what he would get. His experience was, however, completely different from a modern West-End theatre-goer who can hardly tell if what he is to see will be in effect a comedy, tragicomedy, tragedy or anything else. In many cases, any such categories would be considered unsatisfactory altogether. A Greek spectator could put some trust in the generic rules of the performance he visited.

Let us briefly and in a necessarily oversimplified way outline some of his initial expectations before he begins to watch a new comedy staged for him.

He, unlike a modern reader of Menander, viewed comedy as something πιθανόν, true to life, even if the image of Menander's comedy as a mirror of real life may have originated later.[7] From this point of view, divine prologue speakers and improbabilities of coincidence were not seen as incongruous and jarring, but were embraced as metaphors subsumed in the genre that strives at an honest depiction of a contemporary society. This image of comedy had to be negotiated against the recognition that comedy as a 'closed' genre draws on comic resources in order to imitate real life.

At the same time a spectator must have been aware of a few technical rules that could be easily picked up anyway after watching only a handful of plays. The most obvious rule he would have noticed concerns the resolutions: comedy must end with a sense that at least a short-term resolution has been arrived at, whether it be a 'happy ending', stability in the social situation, a wish-fulfilment or retribution of some sort. The rule need not be defined in more than vague terms since each comedy moulded this basic requirement of poetic satisfaction to its own needs.[8]

Another working rule concerns the *argumentum fabulae*. It should deal with social aspects of contemporary life, within this the common denominator easily being the problems of love, property and sociability. These few social aspects of life repeat themselves in every play with variations only in the emphasis of their treatment. It will

not be a criticism, then, to say that *Aspis* may be seen as being wholly made up of these conventional motifs of property, love and sociability. In terms of plot interest, the play derives much of its force from the gradual realization of this conventionality.

A complementary rule suggests that it is satisfactory if the audience have control over what goes on on stage. They have a spatial control, in that all business either appears on stage enacted or becomes narrated for them if it is impracticable to stage it. This rule also concerns control over information and over the planning of intrigues. The spectators are privileged with superior knowledge either through a divine prologue speaker, or characters communicating with them in asides, monologues, and so on. Spectators know the facts and are satisfied to watch who knows what[9] and how they develop their knowledge.

It is true that a play may appear novel, surprising, even shocking, but the audience can count on the fact that eventually they will regain their control. At the beginning of *Perikeiromene,* the spectators probably saw a moving scene during which Glykera, her hair cut off, rushed on stage and lamented the cruel treatment that she suffered from Polemon. She did not know the reason for such behaviour. Only the prologue speaker Agnoia will later explain to us the soldier's motives: the goddess misled him into behaviour totally out of his character. This may seem gratuitous and shocking, therefore she hurries to ask the audience not to be cross with an unusual beginning of the play but bear it patiently because it has a deeper meaning than just a calculated attempt to surprise. Dramatically, she almost seems to be saying, it is an interesting way of bringing the characters onto a new level of knowledge. She says:

πάντα δ' ἐξεκάετο
ταῦθ' ἕνεκα τοῦ μέλλοντος, εἰς ὀργήν θ' ἵνα
οὗτος ἀφίκητ' - ἐγὼ γὰρ ἦγον οὐ φύσει
τοιοῦτον ὄντα τοῦτον, ἀρχὴν δ' ἵνα λάβηι
μηνύσεως τὰ λοιπά - τούς θ' αὑτῶν ποτε
εὕροιεν· ὥστ' εἰ τοῦτ' ἐδυσχέρανέ τις
ἀτιμίαν τ' ἐνόμισε, μεταθέσθω πάλιν. (*Perik.* 162ff.)

Finally, the audience may be aware that it is part of the play's *Weltanschauung*, just as their own outlook, that fortune easily changes without warning, and disturbs the

stability of life. They may expect a play to move from some sort of instability or misfortune and commotion in the direction of stability. Agnoia's words in the prologue just mentioned, continue as following: διὰ γὰρ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ κακὸν εἰς ἀγαθὸν ῥέπει (*Perik.* 169). Usually, the positive resolution will have been achieved only thanks to the initially adverse situation.

Some of these rules, though obvious and easy to pick up during the course of watching a few plays, could also have circulated in a form of self-contained theories (Peripatetic critics come most easily to mind[10]) and anyone seriously interested in theatre could perhaps become acquainted with them. It must be stressed here that no one came to theatre to tick off for himself these rules as they appear in the play. Very probably, these expectations surface in his consciousness only when they seem to contradict the reality of the play or are otherwise explicitly alluded to.

Plays may begin with a situation of turmoil and commotion within a household. Often this concerns frustrations caused by obstacles to a love affair, as e.g. the beginnings of *Misoumenos* and *Heros* show. *Aspis* goes much further in depicting turmoil of tragic dimensions:

The scene opens with a silent procession. On stage arrive Lykian captives and package animals burdened with war booty. An elderly servant must stand out among them for his solemn demeanour. He draws attention to a buckled shield he is carrying. Later we shall learn that the house where he is heading has been prepared for a wedding celebration in the family but it is not easy to guess if either the house or the stage altar were in any way decorated for the occasion. If they were, the opening situation on stage would gain in emotional tension: a procession of gloomy captives would only very jarringly fit into such a festive surrounding - one could almost see it as a reversal of a marriage procession.[11]

The spectacle created by war spoils, though surprising and effective, is not uncommon on the Greek stage. One immediately thinks of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (before 914)[12] or Sophocles' *Trachiniae* (cf. 225ff.). The scholiast on Eur. *Or*. 57 has a comment showing that Helen in a production of Euripides' play known to him arrived with the spoils of Troy. Such a procession would enliven any tragedy and it is a possibility that revivals of older plays may have been unnecessarily pepped up with such spectacles. Menander, who has been at pains to give the impression that the initial

scene imitates tragedy, could be our evidence that this is what spectators commonly saw in the tragic theatre of his time or associated with tragedy.[13]

The slave - it is important for sustaining the tragic sentiment that we do not yet know his name - begins lamenting this sad moment when he has been forced to return home without his young master. They had set out on a military campaign together, full of hopes that their mercenary career should bring benefit to the family. Now that the master is dead, he says, all such hopes have been crushed.

One may wonder whether in: '[*unfortunate*?] *ἡμέραν ἄγω... τὴν νῦν*', (*Asp*. 1, 2) 'this day' is not included more for dramatic purposes than out of any *πιθανότης*. In reality, Daos would have felt his master's loss most acutely some time ago, not now on his arrival.[14] Both tragedy and comedy discipline themselves to portray action that does not exceed a twenty-four hour time span. It is 'today' that the audience have come to watch the performance and the play responds to this by limiting its action in temporal respect: this is the day when events reach a climax, reversal and/or resolution, all in a compressed manner. For different emotional effects, both tragedy and comedy emphasize the aspect of the play's inner time and the suddenness, coincidence and compression of dramatic events. Thus, when Helen bewails the sad fate her husband apparently suffered, she includes an emotionally charged appeal to the sadness of this particular day: *ἰὼ μέλεος ἁμέρα* (Eur. *Helen* 335).[15] Similarly, Electra, who longed for Orestes' arrival, learns the false story of his death and laments: *οἳ 'γὼ τάλαιν', ὄλωλα τῇδ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ*. (Soph. *El*. 674).

We may visualize the slave as glancing at the shield that he is holding, possibly also striking his head and tearing his hair in distress. Of course, we have no support for this in the text; yet, Getas in Men. *Heros* describes for us explicitly how another slave in distress behaves: *τί γὰρ σὺ κόπτεις τὴν κεφαλὴν οὕτω πυκνά; / τί τὰς τρίχας τίλλεις ἐπιστάς; τί στένεις;* (*Her*. 4f.). It is possible that at the beginning of *Aspis* similar antics were staged, even if it is worth remembering that in *Heros* the distress is caused by an infatuation that a slave (!) finds himself in and so in an essentially comical scene the gestures could have been exaggerated out of proportion.[16]

The slave's hopes have been all thwarted now that his master is, as he believes, dead. He had hoped the master would return safe and sound from his military expedition and would live happily ever after (5ff.). It was for his sister's sake that the young master went to war, in order to procure for her the dowry and have her married

to a suitable man when the ποθεινός master arrived home. The adjective indicates that the arrival home was much expected by the whole family, it was to effect a resolution of their social problems similar to resolutions typical in domestic comedy.

However, now it seems that no resolution is possible. The scene is tragic, as the metre and the theme of the lament show.[17] Cassio shows that it contains the typical elements of a ritual lament: a direct address to the deceased person (cf. 2, and 14); a contrast between previous hopes and the present reality (4, 13); the formula 'you are gone, but I…' (13ff.), and praises for the dead person's virtue.[18]

Yet, because the lament also includes the background facts typical of a comic expository scene, it gains in ambiguity. We hear of generically comic characters in an unusual, tragic situation. A mercenary soldier who goes to war to become quickly rich is a type that we come across in Men. *Kolax* (cf. 27ff.), and soldiers also appear in *Misoumenos*, *Perikeiromene*, *Sikyonios*, *Eunouchos*, and probably *Dis Exapaton*.

The dowry for the young master's sister is procured so that she may marry a suitable husband - again, there are many comedies where procurement of dowry causes an intrigue to take place (see Plaut. *Trin*. 156ff. below, page 180). All that can be said at this stage of the play is that the audience see a tragic situation embedded in the reality and problems of comedy.

In a novel way, in this play the dowry for a girl appears on stage at the very beginning of the play, thus seemingly removing the most obvious obstacle that usually stands in the way of a comic wedding. Apparently, no intrigue will have to be devised to find the money. In fact, however, we shall see that it is exactly the presence of the dowry that will prove forbidding for the girl's happiness. If no dowry had been brought from the campaign, the problem towards which the play is heading would disappear!

In the adjective καταξίωι (9), Menander shows the obvious worry of a middle class Athenian. We find similar words in Plaut. *Trin*.: *…habeo dotem unde dem, / ut eam in se dignam condicionem conlocem* (158f.). At the same time, there is a subtle preparation for the problem of the play - Kleostratos wanted to find for his sister a suitable husband, worthy of his family, such as the requirements of Poetic Justice call for. As the plot will evolve, this adjective will be seen in retrospect as charged and ironic. It will be shown that a man completely unworthy of the girl will try to lay his hands on her and her dowry. The κατάξιος will be ousted by an old, antisocial man with

no amatory motives - the very opposite of what comedy's rules require of a satisfactory bridegroom.

The audience may wonder how the sombre beginning will be smoothed out with a wedding that will necessarily have to ensue: a marriageable girl has been mentioned and the rules of Poetic Justice applicable in the genre will see to it that she is not left unmarried. The spectators, in short, are aware of the rules of the game and have to reconcile what they see with this awareness. They wait to see how the two jarring strands within the play, wedding and love versus a death in the family, will be unified.[19]

For himself, the slave had hoped: *ἐμοί τ' ἔσεσθαι τῶν μακρῶν πόνων τινὰ / ἀνάπαυσιν εἰς τὸ γῆρας εὐνοίας χάριν*. (11f.)[20] *εὐνοίας χάριν* in *Aspis* has two expository functions at this place. Firstly, the slave is for the first time shown loyal to his young master: importantly enough, as there will be opportunities in the play to prove it.[21] The second point is more important still: Pan in Men. *Dyskolos* gives his divine *ἐπιμέλεια* as the reason for his interest in organizing the events in the lives of the mortals who will fill the comic stage. The piety of Knemon's daughter caused that: *τὰς δὲ συντρόφους ἐμοὶ / Νύμφας κολακεύουσ' ἐπιμελῶς τιμῶσά τε / πέπεικεν αὐτῆς ἐπιμέλειαν σχεῖν τινα / ἡμᾶς* (*Dysk*. 36ff.)

The effect of Pan's *ἐπιμέλεια* will be a marriage granted to the girl for her piety. The Lar in Plaut. *Aulularia* promises similarly motivated divine help that stems from the piety of Euclio's daughter, and the result will be another marriage: *eius honoris gratia / feci thensaurum ut hic reperiret Euclio, / quo illam facilius nuptum, si uellet, daret.* (Plaut. *Aul*. 25ff.)

These examples may easily be compared with the expository information we get in *Aspis*. The slave expresses his *εὔνοια* and thus paves the ground for his role of a 'god': his care and interest in his master's property and a wedding for his sister will be organized and directed through the intrigue designed by this loyal slave. He will thus affect the lives of mortals in a similar way that gods in other dramas do.[22] Of course Daos is not a god who can effect his *ἐπιμέλεια* as easily as he wishes, but his stressing of the loyalty to the young master – that developed out of admiration for Kleostratos' character – is paralleled in the mentioned comedies where gods explain in similar terms their reasons for the involvement in the plot situations.

Ironically, *τῶν μακρῶν πόνων* will not point to (as he means) past toils only, but also to the troubles that are still to come (the intrigue included). It is impossible to say if the audience got this hint and began to suspect that the slave could become the intriguer of the play.[23]

νῦν δὲ σὺ μὲν οἴχει παραλόγως τ' ἀνήρπασαι (13), he laments in words that resemble Electra's lament in Sophocles' play (cf. *φροῦδος ἀναρπασθείς* Soph. *El*. 848). In fact, the entire lament that opens the play bears resemblance to Sophocles' *Electra* 1126ff. There are, however, differences. In *Electra*, we are in control of what we see because the intrigue was prepared in advance. Electra's lament is intense and incoherent. In *Aspis*, the lament comes at the beginning of the play and it must fulfil a different dramatic role. It is a bold, surprising, and gripping beginning but at the same time, the tone must allow some expository facts to sneak in. Therefore, Daos must retain his composure to a degree that Electra did not have to.[24] Electra makes the same mistake as Daos does, but the audience of the comedy were not prepared for that possibility and so it is difficult to tell if they discerned the connection between the two dramatic texts and the similarity of the mistake just because they could have been acquainted with the tragedy.[25]

Clash of characters, and their gradual self-revelation

To appreciate the ensuing dialogue between the slave and the old man it is not necessary to be fully aware of the typological potential that the two characters contain, not even the tragic paradigms that may have been a prototype for the scene. If, however, the audience are aware of the 'typological promise' of an antisocial and greedy *senex* on the one hand, and the potential for craftiness on the part of the leading slave on the other, they can appreciate the subtle humour of their gradual revelation – of their 'dropping of the mask', so to speak, in front of the audience and in front of each other.

Significantly, the slave introduces himself for us first by his social role,[26] and he does so in a 'loyal' juxtaposition to his master's name: *ἐγὼ δ' ὁ παιδαγωγός, <ὦ> Κλεόστρατε* (14). Menander prepares the ground for later by making the leading slave a pedagogue for he will later quote extensively from tragedy, use philosophical or medical maxims.[27]

Daos praises his 'late' master's military quality *ἀνὴρ γὰρ ἦσθα τὴν ψυχὴν μέγας*, / *εἰ καί τις ἄλλος* (17f.).[28] 'Μεγαλοψυχία here denotes military *ἀρετή*. The ideal, however, has a wide range of association and it happens to be the most prominent virtue in the Peripatetic Philosophy which represented the advanced thought in Menander's time.'[29]

The old man cuts short the pedagogue's characterization of Kleostratos. His first words may well be false: *τῆς ἀνελπίστου τύχης*, / *ὦ* Δᾶε (18f.). This seems to repeat the slave's *παραπλήσι' ὡς τότ' ἠλπισ' ἐξορμώμεν*[*ος* (3). In that case, he could have been on stage as early as line 3 was pronounced. Of course, the echo is not clinching for the staging. Especially since it is nothing strange to comment on the unexpectedness of misfortune such as befell this household (cf. Soph. *Electra* 1127). More importantly, in his first utterance, the old man names the slave as Daos, and from the pedagogue we immediately hear his name as well - it is Smikrines. In view of the later developments, it is ironic and apposite that Smikrines, the man who will suffer at the hands of the intriguing slave, is the first to spell out Daos' name. By uttering the opponent's name, in itself a very common way of introducing comic characters to the audience,[30] the characters may be implicitly emphasizing their role in the plot.

When the slave names himself as his master's *pedagogue*, the tone gains in ambiguity if the spectators acknowledge the existence of the genre. The relationship between a pedagogue and a young master is a familiar concept in the plots of New Comedy. A pedagogue may try to protect the master against love, siding with the old master (as Lydus does in Plaut. *Bacchides*), or side with him against the old morose master (as Acanthio does in Plaut. *Mercator*: line 91 makes it clear that he was Charinus' pedagogue). The scope of the role differs depending on where the pedagogue's loyalty is. Even in this play, the struggle to gain the pedagogue's loyalty will become obvious (cf. 162f.), even though we know already that he shows deep *εὔνοια* for the young master.

However, the type of a pedagogue finds its way into canonical tragedies as well - the one in Sophocles' *Electra* immediately comes to mind - and this should stop us (even though we are watching a comedy) from thinking of it as predominantly a comic type. Menander can carry on exploiting the ambiguity of the type that is equally recognizable on both the comic and tragic stage.[31]

Despite his name, Kleostratos was recruited to procure a dowry for his sister and then (as the slave suggests), he would have given up his mercenary career to enjoy a

peaceful life. Interestingly enough, later we shall hear that another character in the play bears a soldierly name as well: his uncle Chairestratos. The name is common enough, but could it be that by choosing such a name, Chairestratos will be seen even closer to Kleostratos' role in the play: they have both provided a dowry for Kleostratos' sister; and they are also both mistakenly believed dead at some point during the course of the play.

To signify the person's characteristics by an (un)suitably chosen name or nickname is a device that easily finds its place into Greek drama. Apart from *ad hoc* comic names and patronymics (e.g. Ἀποδρασιππίδης, *Vesp.* 185), or contemptuous distortions of names (e.g. Δημολογοκλέων *Vesp.* 343b), Aristophanes may at times wish to give his characters names that have a longer-term meaning in the plays. For instance, the opposite types of characters within one family are called Philokleon and Bdelykleon in *Vespae* and it is through their names that their relation in the plot is made more obvious. In *Lysistrata* (again, an eloquent name!) the names of a husband and wife gain an erotic sense appropriate to the plot if used together: the name of Myrrhine is perfectly common and in itself innocuous but in company with her husband's name ('Kinesias'), it prepares us for a scene of sexual teasing.[32] In *Aves*, Peisetairos and Euelpides reveal their names only at 644f., after persuading the Chorus of birds of their divine nature. We hear their names only after this dramatic role has become clear and the humour is derived from looking back at their action that 'ironically' suits their names.[33] Apparently, then, names can constitute a psychological portrait of their bearers and even add a humorous or ironic touch to the dramatic plot.[34]

The juxtaposition, almost opposition, of Daos' and Smikrines' name reverts the scene to a rather lighter mood. That is, if we grant that they carry a certain promise of how the plot will develop and the characters will interact in it. Of course, we cannot tell just how ready the spectators are to let their knowledge of the two names shape their expectations and enjoy the ambiguity of the opening scene that comes from such awareness.

It is reasonable to admit that the audience expected the bearer of the name Smikrines to be greedy. Other Smikrines's in Menander include the one in *Epitrepontes*, who complains about his daughter's profligate husband. As Chairestratos confirms in an aside (137f.), Smikrines' calculations are correct and the old man has every reason to want to protect his property from the big spender who has married his

daughter. Even so, they call him names: Chairestratos says he is a κίναδος, a symbol of shamelessness, who upsets houses (165), and this exactly delineates the view of Smikrines in *Aspis*, who is shameful and cunning as well.[35]

MacCary's efforts to find a common denominator in all Menander's slaves called Daoi require qualifications that weaken his thesis.[36] At most, it can be said that the name truly bears a promise of fulfilling a lighter role in the play, whether it be an episodic role, or an essential part important, for example, in devising an intrigue. However, even if a particular name did not convey any important hint at the character's role in the play, it may certainly gain in significance through the juxtaposition with an antagonist's name, foreshadowing possible directions in the development of the play. At the same time, it comes as a surprise that the serious pedagogue should actually have a name that rings of naughtiness and schemes. Some in the audience must have heaved a sigh of relief upon hearing this name.

When Smikrines is divested of anonymity, his behaviour on stage gains in symbolic meaning, even if we do not in fact know what precisely he may be doing. He may have been ogling the war booty for some time now, either conspicuously or with pretended disinterestedness. What is more, the whole plot problem, concentrated into one stage constellation from the beginning of the play, now may seem more explicit: there is the absent Kleostratos' shield, and the dowry he intended for his sister, the man who will want to lay his hands on it, and the slave whose name promises to stop the old man from seizing the property. This stage picture thus foreshadows the whole plot and the functions of the two leading characters in it.

Daos will narrate for Smikrines what happened to his master. He begins in the style of tragic messenger speeches (ποταμός τίς ἐστὶ τῆς Λυκίας καλούμενος / Ξάνθος…23).[37] The soldiers were winning easily, looting villages, coming back to camps with loads of money: χρήματα / ἕκαστος εἶχε πόλλ' ἀπελθών (32f.). Menander makes Smikrines reply at this place with an ambiguous ὡς καλόν. In the light of Tyche's later description of his character, he does not rejoice here at the soldiers' success but only poorly veils his interest in their booty. Here it may still be played down but already his comments begin to show significant consistency.[38]

Even Kleostratos experienced good fortune and possessed χρυσοῦς τινας ἑξακοσί]ους, ποτήρι' ἐπιεικῶς συχνά, / τῶν τ' αἰχ]μαλώτων τοῦτον ὃν ὁρᾶις πλησίον / [ὄχλον…] (34ff.). With all this booty, he sent Daos to Rhodes, showing full trust in the

loyal slave. The items, and even the order in which Daos mentions them, immediately stick in Smikrines' mind (82ff.). The good fortune that the Lykian campaign started with was the real cause for the misfortune that ensued when the soldiers loosened their guard. Military instability belongs to the sphere of Tyche; when we eventually see her later on this will be acknowledged by her.

From deserters the *barbaroi* learned of the soldiers' scattered force. In the evening the soldiers were revelling (45ff.) and the enemy could take them by surprise. Smikrines disapproves of the soldiers' lack of care for their acquired fortune: *πονηρόν γε σφόδρα* (48). It is a common sentiment that too much good luck is dangerous, e.g.: *ἀρχὴ μεγίστη τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις κακῶν / τἀγαθά, τὰ λίαν ἀγαθά* (Menander fr. 670 K-A)[39]

Unlike these men Daos was not overwhelmed by a sense of triumph but showed he guarded the master's property in a responsible way: *νύκτας φυλακ]ὴν τῶν χρημάτων ποούμενος | τῶν τ' ἀνδραποδίων…*(54f.). Smikrines again reacts ambiguously: *ὡς ὤνησ' ἀποσταλεὶς τότε* (62). Though it is possible that Smikrines feels sympathy for Daos who is, after all, the only person who would listen to the old man (163), it is much more probable that he has his eyes focused on the present booty saved by a nice piece of luck. From a secure place, Daos learnt that the Lykians took their prisoners to villages in the mountains. Some in the audience may ask why we need to be told this but hardly anyone would stop to consider the importance of this information. It does prepare a plausible explanation for Kleostratos' return home, but the spectators may as well just wait and see what the prologue god will tell them. They must expect the god(dess) any moment now and that may shape their expectations accordingly. Indeed, the divine prologue speaker will maintain that Kleostratos is not dead, but he could not communicate this to Daos as he was taken a prisoner by the Lykians. The hint here is small, but it offers the only way of rescuing Kleostratos for the plot.[40]

σαφῶς οὐκ οἶδα: ambiguity of the tragic scene

It has been mentioned already that despite the oppressive atmosphere, the themes that Daos mentioned in his lament form the basis of the comic *argumentum* of a number of plays. Comedies, we may continue, show soldiers differently than Daos does. For example, the rich soldier in Plaut. *Truculentus* plays an important part in the plot exactly because he became rich during his military campaigns. He hopes to impress his girlfriend with outrageously inflated or made up memories of fighting, and

help himself in his amatory interests. In this play, Kleostratos' military achievements are not even mentioned; his love life, moreover, is not included in the list of frustrated wishes that Daos expressed earlier. And when Kleostratos eventually returns and a marriage is arranged for him, we are treated to one more subversion of the dramatic function of comic soldiers.

So far, Smikrines has not mentioned Kleostratos by name. Now he goes *in medias res* and asks: *ἐν δὲ τοῖς νεκροῖς / πεπτωκότ' εἶδες τοῦτον;* (68f.). Smikrines wants to 'pin bad fortune down' and put her in her place with inquisitive questions that require definitive answers. He wants to be certain of the facts before he can act on them.[41] Daos, however, cannot decidedly make a tragedy of the situation despite his own conviction that tragedy *did* happen. He cannot give the old man a decisive answer that Smikrines wants but says only: *αὐτὸν μὲν σαφῶς / οὐκ ἦν ἐπιγνῶναι…*(69f.). This messenger from the battlefield was not an eyewitness of what he is reporting! This is clearly a departure from the conventions of tragic messengers. They tend to put a great emphasis on the fact that what they are reporting is a personally observed situation. If not, there is a possibility that an element of mistake sneaks into the exposition if *σαφήνεια* cannot be guaranteed. For a connoisseur of the genre an admission of uncertainty holds a certain promise of a resolution to the expository difficulty and could be said to be amusing in its own right as an element of dramatic convention. Parallels may be added from Ter. *Eun*. 110ff., Men. *Epit.* 491 or *Heros* 20. Similarly, in tragedy, a messenger often says that he is bringing a clear message and confirms this by stressing that he has seen everything with his own eyes: *ἥκω σαφῆ τἀκεῖθεν ἐκ στρατοῦ φέρων* (A. *Sept.* 40).[42] So often, actually, that Euripides can play with the cliché. Inability to be certain of the basic facts that Teukros brings becomes an interesting problem in the plot of Eur. *Helen* (cf. 308). In *Supplices*, Theseus extravagantly talks with tongue in cheek about clear reports from the place of fight: as if the situation allowed watching others fight when one has to be careful to save his own hide! (Cf. 852ff.)

The reason why Daos is forced to infer facts is that the bodies of the soldiers who fell in the battle had been lying in the sun for three days, their faces bloated. *πῶς οὖν οἶσθα;* (72) Smikrines insists. Daos recognized him by the buckled shield lying on the body. The natives did not take the only *gnorisma* because it was too damaged.

The captain buried the bodies and after a few days' sojourn on Rhodes Daos returned back home. 'That is the whole story', he says. Smikrines shows that the booty has been on his mind all the while: ΣΜ. *χρυσοῦς φὴις ἄγειν | ἑξακοσίους;* ΔΑ. *ἔγωγε.* ΣΜ. *καὶ ποτήρια;* (82f.). Daos grasps the meaning of his questions and hints as much when he calls him *κληρονόμε* (85). One of Smikrines' most comic and revealing features in the play is his consciously emphatic effort to refute everyone's suspicions that he is a *comic type* with property being all that he could be interested in: *πῶς; οἴει <μ'> ἐρωτᾶν, εἰπέ μοι, / διὰ τοῦτ'; Ἄπολλον· τἆλλα δ' ἡρπάσθη;* (85f.)[43]

Examples of such moral 'bathos' appear throughout the play (cf. 149ff.). Daos continues: all this property that you see, clothes and cloaks in the boxes, even captives, are *yours*: *οἰκεῖον* (89). Again, Smikrines denies he would be interested in the property and expresses his wish that Kleostratos should have lived. A hint at the looming danger, the '*periculum fabulae*' comes immediately: *εἶτ' ἐντυχεῖν βουλήσομαί τι Δᾶε σοὶ / κατὰ σχολήν* (93f.). Smikrines is aware that Daos is the only one who will pay attention to him (163), and he hopes to have a word with him about the current affairs - having learnt enough about him we anticipate this will concern the property Daos has brought.

Smikrines says he will go inside his house (*εἴσω παριέναι* 95) undoubtedly in order to devise a scheme in order to appropriate the booty. A similar situation occurs in *Samia*. Moschion is not sure how he will be able to come clean to his father about the pregnant Plangon and make him consent to a marriage with a poor neighbour's daughter. He decides to go away and practise his speech: (*τί δ' οὐκ* suppl. e.g. Kassel) *ἀ]πελθὼν εἰς ἐρημίαν τινὰ / γυμν]άζομ'; οὐ γὰρ μέτριος ἀγών ἐστί μοι.* (*Sam*. 94f.) With a bit of sarcasm, we may comment that Smikrines need not seek a solitary place far away: as an antisocial character, he has his house all for himself to serve the role of Moschion's *ἐρημία*. Right after Moschion's exit and very near the end of Act I, we learn that Moschion may dispel his worries because his father has already made an agreement with his neighbour that Moschion will marry Plangon (113ff.). We shall see that in *Aspis* Tyche hurries to put Smikrines' ambition in a wider perspective.

To sum up, during this brief scene before the prologue, we have been exposed to a mixture of both the tragic and comic atmosphere[44] with a unique effect of drawing attention to the boundaries of the genre and especially to the spectators' awareness of the repertoire. The audience, in order to appreciate the play as comedy, need to be aware of the generic requirements and test what they are seeing against this awareness.

Not least, the mixture of comic and tragic elements creates a gripping puzzle that requires the attention of the audience until they see things back on the right generic track.

The omniscient goddess: the end of questions, *ne quis erret uostrum*

The sentiment that fortune may quickly change was commonly expressed in the fourth century. It is frequently exemplified, as e.g. in Men. *Georgos*: *τὸ τῆς τύχης γὰρ ῥεῦμα μεταπίπτει ταχύ* (fr. 2.5). Comedy made fortune and its reversals into a stock working method of the genre, which is obvious, given the nature of its plots.

Uniquely, the obvious working method of the genre becomes very explicitly the principal force in the play by the fact that Menander makes Tyche the *spiritus movens* of *Aspis*. This becomes an almost self-reflexive statement on comedy's working methods.

Before Smikrines expresses his wish to marry the girl, we get a significant piece of information about Kleostratos from the *θεὸς προλογίζων. νῦν δ' ἀγνοοῦσι καὶ πλανῶνται* (99) says the still unidentified goddess and explains how a friend of Kleostratos' took his shield to fight and fell immediately. *ὡς ποικίλον πρᾶγμ' ἐστὶ καὶ πλάνον τύχη* (*Kitharistes* fr. 8)! We may observe that death in comic expositions is sometimes exploited but almost never should it be seen as emotionally marked or emphasized. This fact made the onstage sincere lament of Kleostratos' death very problematic. In contrast, the real death of the man who fell with Kleostratos' shield is passed over quickly and he remains anonymous for us. There is no hint of the bravery or other military qualities of this anonymous man. He is not given any prominence; all that is said of him is that he fell immediately.[45] Such emotionally neutral deaths do appear in expositions, where their role, just as here, is to be a cog in the mechanism that creates a destabilizing problem. Here it misleads Daos and the two stage households into believing in Kleostratos' death.

οὗτος διημάρτηκεν (110): Daos made a mistake - he was a 'puppet' in Fortune's hands. With Tyche's arrival, we see in retrospect that the very starting point of the play, that is, a plot complication caused in ignorance by a mix up of two persons that leads to Daos' misidentification, is actually typical of the comedy of errors. As she talks about this mistake, we wonder if the goddess has not had her hand in misleading Daos. In fact, it is often Tyche's role that *gnorismata* are preserved in a particular play: *εἰ νῦν*

τι τῶν τούτου σέσωκεν ἡ Τύχη; (Men. *Epit.* 351). Ironically, her help will complicate things: she reverses her own role and *preserves a gnorisma that misleads*.[46] If the enemies had taken the shield away, Daos would not have jumped to conclusions but would instead have started looking for his master. From now on, the audience may view Daos as a more common bearer of the name connected with intrigues and with the generally lighter comic atmosphere.

Ne quis erret uostrum (Plaut. *Trin*. 4), Kleostratos became a captive, just as we suspected (112; 67f.). He lives and will be saved soon (ὅσον οὐδέπω 113). Whatever she meant by 'soon', Kleostratos will not arrive before Daos' charade and the betrothal of Chaireas to Kleostratos' sister. The imprecision need not be important. It can only stress the fact that Tyche will govern the timing of the individuals' entrances and exits in the play.[47] As we shall see, some characters in the play will also try to appropriate this role of a 'director' hopeful that they can stage other characters' exits and entrances.

Tyche sets the audience straight; only they now have all the information. She does away with the previous mistakes, sets the audience straight and brings order to the genre. She describes Smikrines' nature in the most explicit terms: not only does this support the audience's suspicion that he is a miser, as his name and the signals he kept sending must have hinted, but it also conceals a hidden preparation for the plausibility of the intrigue. She says: πονηρίαι δὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὅλως / ὑπερπέπαικεν· οὗτος οὔτε συγγενῆ / οὔτε φίλον οἶδεν οὐδὲ τῶν ἐν τῶι βίωι / αἰσχρῶν πεφρόντικ' οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ βούλεται / ἔχειν ἅπαντα· τοῦτο γινώσκει μόνον, / καὶ ζῆι μονότροπος, γραῦν ἔχων διάκονον (116ff). He does not care for his next of kin or friends, hopes to own everything, and lives alone. Enough for us to guess that he will shamelessly try to lay his hands on the property brought on stage almost in front of his doorway. It was not exceptional to have completely negative characters in Plautus (*lenones* usually show no redeeming features), but we cannot tell if Plautus anyhow reduced their psychological depths for comic purposes or whether he took what he found in the Greek originals. The fact is that Smikrines is one of the most negative characters in Menander.[48] His negative features are essential for the plot. Smikrines' impatience and greed will effectively blind him to the intrigue set in motion, and to his own role in the comedy. Also, his wickedness counter-balances the other characters' behaviour: we know that Kleostratos is not dead, but characters within the play do not, and their light-hearted intrigue executed in the course of the play must be motivated by an extremely vicious

character for the charade to be ethically tolerable at all. His black-and-white characterization removes the need to give his opponents finer touches; the piece becomes an intrigue play.[49]

'Wealth acquired through *hubris*, 'violence', brings *ate*, 'infatuation, blindness', which is followed by punishment.' Campbell's discussion of Solon's poem (7-32) summarizes the Greek truism that is applicable to the plot of *Aspis*, making Smikrines an unoriginal character in that respect.[50] We shall soon learn that his interest in shameful gain will become an obstacle to a decent marriage of the *epikleros* girl and we should not therefore disregard the possibility that the spectators may have guessed the train of Smikrines' thoughts and expected him to devise some scheme to get hold of the property.

As noted, his role in the play is somewhat comparable to greedy *lenones* of Plautus, as they are represented for example in *Poenulus*. The pimp Lycus is greedy (*leno…auri cupidus* 179), he will wish to abuse girls in his power for his profit; in the broadest sense he is opposed to a stable marriage and in this respect as antisocial as Smikrines is. In a summary way: *neque peiiurior neque peior alter usquam est gentium* (825).

I do not suggest that the type of an old greedy man was influenced by, or developed alongside, the type of *pornoboskos*, whose role in Greek comedy is difficult to assess anyway. It is more probable that the necessities of plot often took advantage of either a pimp or an old man in thwarting the aspirations of a young couple in love whose aspirations form the core of the comic resolution. Such obstacles may be created even by a member of the lover's family: we have a *senex libidinosus* in Plaut. *Casina* or *Mercator*, who is a father of the young lover; in Plaut. *Aulularia* he is a rich and well-meaning uncle. In Men. *Georgos*, the rich farmer Kleainetos wanted to marry a poor girl without any dowry out of pure charitable reasons, but again this effectively upsets the young man's interests. We see that it is not a particular character type that embodies the obstacle to a young man's love interest; rather, a plot situation can sometimes make even a socially 'good' character the obstacle to the resolution.

The place where the servant went, Tyche continues, is the house that belongs to Smikrines' *younger* brother. He is χρηστὸς δὲ τῶι τρόπωι πάνυ / καὶ πλούσιος (125f.);[51] similarly at 130 where he is again called χρηστός. She has nothing to say about his proneness to melancholy that will be essential for the on-the-spur-of-the-moment

scheme.[52] The juxtaposition that follows is revealing, especially now that we know that Kleostratos is alive:

καὶ παρθένου
μιᾶς πατὴρ ὤν, ὧι κατέλιπεν ἐκπλέων
ὁ μειρακίσκος τὴν ἀδελφήν. (126ff.)

Chairestratos' opposition to his brother is outlined even through the situation in his household: he has a wife and a daughter. When Kleostratos (ὁ μειρακίσκος) sailed away, he left his sister with Chairestratos. By the juxtaposition of a young man and a virgin girl (παρθένου, 126), Tyche unobtrusively paves the way for, and hints at, another domestic resolution in the play: the wedding between Kleostratos and Chairestratos' daughter. Of course, Tyche does not inform us of any particulars of the play's resolution and only concentrates on the main facts (τὰ κεφάλαια, *Dysk*. 45). The audience may, however, wait in anticipation to see if there will be any place devoted to a relationship between the two young persons.

Chairestratos, seeing the fix in which Kleostratos' sister found herself because of her brother's delay, decided on the wedding between her and his son Chaireas.[53] The wedding was to be today (νυνί 137). Just as at the beginning of the play, so now we hear a serious piece of information that is related to the day of the performance.

Plaut. *Trin*. shows a striking similarity in the intention of a relative (in Plautus only a friendly neighbour) towards another man's daughter and her well-being: *nunc si ille huc saluos reuenit, reddam suom sibi; / si quid eo fuerit, certe illius filiae, / quae mihi mandatast, habeo dotem unde dem, / ut eam in se dignam condicionem conlocem*. (Plaut. *Trin*. 156ff.)

Now, however, Smikrines will become an obstacle to the wedding. The dowry that Kleostratos intended for a κατάξιος brother-in-law, will prove irresistible and the old miser will want to marry the girl himself. Tyche assures us vaguely that Smikrines' ambition will come to nought. He will only succeed in revealing his true colours to everybody.[54] Finally, the goddess reveals her name and the function she plays in the *fabula* (τίς εἰμι, πάντων κυρία / τούτων βραβεῦσαι καὶ διοικῆσαι; Τύχη 147f.). [55]

I find Hunter's conclusions in a different context relevant here. He says: 'In the *Amphitruo*, then, and to a lesser extent in the *Dyskolos*, the prologising god is

important not merely for what he says or for his direct intervention in the action, but also because some of the events of the play fall into patterns which we recognise as belonging to that god's sphere.'[56] No play seems to follow this more truly than *Aspis*. Tyche is directly involved in organizing the play as a divine playwright; characters invoke her as a force that rules our lives, or abuse her as a generic element of tragedy (cf. Daos' use of tragic quotations later during the charade).

Impatient Smikrines comes on stage after Tyche. He inadvertently repeats Tyche's accusation of him as φιλάργυρος (149, cp. 123) and denies any such intention. The denial is an ironic follow-up to what Tyche has just said of him.[57] It also draws attention to his entrance on stage that in itself reveals his impatient effort to do something about the booty - of course he lacks any knowledge that the goddess moves the play and that he has a clearly prescribed place in it. This ignorance will form part of the humour concentrated in his role and Tyche's answer to his own ambition to control the situation. He self-consciously rejects accusations of being crazed for wealth. He has not even checked the exact amount of the booty because he knows well that they like to call him names. Besides – the amount may easily be learnt from slaves.

Through a soliloquy, a character may expose his true feelings and try to establish a sincere rapport with the audience.[58] In this case, with a bit of stretch, Smikrines seems to show equal insensitivity to the real people in the audience through his frankness when alone, as to the stage characters through his veiled words. His soliloquy makes his greed transparent; he dares to speak more freely than he would in the face of stage characters. For this reason, his words only succeed in distancing him from the spectators.

Smikrines wanted to check the exact amount of the property brought from the expedition. This draws our attention to the fact that the play operates with the irony of having *two* conventional amounts of the dowry for Kleostratos' sister. Jacques' completion of line 35 is almost certain: Kleostratos' booty is worth six hundred gold *staters*. The amount is conventional to an almost striking degree. If one were to waste time in pondering what could happen *exo tou dramatos*, he may conclude that Kleostratos could easily have been on the point of stopping his mercenary career because he had reached the amount that comedy requires, when the Lykians forcefully stepped in. The ironic role of the amount of money for the dowry becomes obvious when we see that Chairestratos prepared an equivalent sum of money as a dowry for

Kleostratos' sister (2 talents, equivalent to 600 gold *staters*: 135f.). Tyche repeats the number when she mentions how Kleostratos' property worth 600 gold *staters* (138f.) drew Smikrines' attention.

Smikrines, in the same breath as talking about the property he saw on stage, mentions in a false and sinister way that it is out of the question even to think about a wedding in such circumstances. He wants to knock on Kleostratos' door and call Daos out but is anticipated by Daos himself. The slave's entrance on stage at that moment is weakly motivated[59], but this may have been overlooked given the consistency in the portrayal of sustained gloom that Daos brings to the scene from the opening of the play. Over his shoulder Daos addresses the women in the house and consoles them in their present distress. Why did Menander hesitate to include highly popular door-knocking in this scene? It would have had the advantage of showing Smikrines forcefully asking at the house door for what, he believes, is duly his.

One possible explanation is that only Daos would be available in the house to come to answer the knocking. A slave answering the door and an intruder who would try to impose his will on an unwilling door-keeper, 'to lord it over him', would perhaps threaten to move the scene into an explicitly comic show more quickly than Menander may have wished.[60]

Another explanation offers itself as well and depends on the visual symbol concerning the problem of who controls the stage. In Plaut. *Trinummus*, Lysiteles wants to go to find Charmides inside the stage house and talk to him but the door noise makes him delay his plan (*Trin*. 1121ff.) He wanted to go inside, but now keeps away from the door. Why is that? The following scene shows that by remaining hidden from sight Lysiteles can keep control of the dialogue that goes on between Charmides and Callicles. So, instead of coming right up to the man he wanted to talk to, Lysiteles waits a bit longer to see what the man is talking about. Such a control of situation cannot possibly be granted to Smikrines in *Aspis*: he too wanted to knock on Chairestratos' door and call Daos out, but right then the door opens and Daos comes out himself. Smikrines is not going to be presented in stage terms as controlling the situation: he does not hide himself from Daos' sight moving further aside in order to see what the slave is going to talk about but will - *in his impatience* - address him directly without delay. In short, Daos comes on stage but the situation does not develop into a conventional staging of the control of space and information. The reason is

perfectly compatible with Smikrines' portrayal as an impatient character - much to his own undoing. His impatience forces him to let go of the control.

Smikrines starts the dialogue with the same cliché he used earlier: *ὤφελε... ἐκεῖνος...ζῆν* (168f., cf. 90). His choice of words (*διοικεῖν* 169, *κύριος ἁπάντων* 171) again moves us back to the irony of Tyche controlling the play, of which Smikrines has no idea.[61] The old man then expounds what he sees as Chairestratos' cupidity that threatens his own (Smikrines') interests: it angers him that Chairestratos is becoming rich at Smikrines' cost, beyond the limits of moderation (175 *οὐδὲ μετριάζει*) by preparing to give Kleostratos' sister now (*νυνί* 176) to god knows whom, treating Smikrines as a slave or *nothos*.

He takes it as threatening his very domestic interests and acts upon this sense of injustice. So at 182ff.: *τὴν οὐσίαν / οὐχὶ καταλείψω τὴν ἐμὴν διαρπάσαι τούτοις...* Another Smikrines, in Menander's *Epitrepontes,* also expresses his concern over what is happening to his property: *ἀλλ' ἦ περιμένω καταφαγεῖν τὴν προῖκά μου / τὸν χρηστὸν αὐτῆς ἄνδρα καὶ λόγους λέγω / περὶ τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ;* (1065ff.).

Taking the advice of some acquaintances, Smikrines says falsely, he will marry the girl himself. The law, Smikrines rightly remarks to counter disapproval that he expects, supports such a marriage.[62] Daos asks leave not to be involved in matters that concern citizens - the free should settle the problems of weddings, blood relations, or inheritance. It is ironic that in fact Daos will be later instrumental in the intrigue that will concern the whole status of the *oikos*.[63]

Back on track

With Tyche's background information, we may look at Daos' initial arrival home without his master as an exaggerated example, blown into a full drama, of a slave arriving home before his master who will eventually reach home as well.[64]

δοκῶ δέ σοι τι πρὸς θεῶν ἁμαρτάνειν; (205) the Athenian Smikrines now asks Daos.[65] With tact, Daos tells him that many things that they consider right are thought wrong where he comes from. It is a fine touch to inform the audience at this stage that Daos is a Phrygian: *φρονεῖς ἐμοῦ / βέλτιον εἰκότως* (208f.) says he. 'You, of course, have more sense', being an Athenian. I suspect that Daos plays it at a deeper level than just ethnic irony at this point. If it is not too fanciful, Daos may be hinting at 208f. that he is aware of Smikrines' character and his feverish effort to *devise a scheme*.

It is interesting to observe how gradually Menander discloses relevant or less relevant facts about individual *personae*. It is a fine comic touch to have made a Phrygian slave more tactful, loyal, and righteous than an Athenian freeborn citizen; this may come from Euripides. The description of Phrygians was stereotypically contemptuous: they were seen as effeminate cowards, κακοὶ Φρύγες or *timidi Phrygae* (Eur. *Or*. 1111f., 1351, 1448, *Alc*. 675f.; cf. Tertullian *de anima* 20.3). Daos, however, did not shun accompanying his master to the battlefield, nor did he run away with all the property entrusted to his care.[66] This is striking as barbarian slaves are reputed not to care much about their masters, as is maintained e.g. in *Georg*. 56ff. The 'manly' Thracian τραπεζοποιός - another ethnic figure on stage, famed for his virility[67] – is amazed at Daos' loyalty (239ff.). Earlier in the play, when the atmosphere was still oppressive, Daos' ethnic origin was not an issue at all. His loyalty and affiliation to the 'deceased' master's household made him distance himself from the enemy *barbarians*, saying: λαθόντες τοὺς σκοποὺς / τοὺς ἡμετέρους οἱ βάρβαροι λόφον τινὰ / ἐπίπροσθ' ἔχοντες ἔμενον (41ff.).

It is an innovation that next we see the cook *leaving* the house where he was to prepare a wedding feast.[68] He is lamenting his bad luck in markedly tragic terms.[69] His language is flowery and inventive, for instance the image of a corpse snatching his money. The cook's words about the death in the house are not offensive only because we know that no death occurred and the cook's help will yet be needed. The 'arrival' of an imagined corpse forces the cook away, far from the play's scope.[70] But his exit here works also as an ironic comment on, and a promise of, the wedding feast that will be mentioned at the end of the play and of which he will be a part: we may assume that when Kleostratos has arrived home, the cook would be called back again and instead of one wedding he will have to take charge of two.[71]

The cook lowers the tension of the previous scenes with some comfortingly conventional humour. He calls his attendant 'ἱερόσυλε' (227), by a comic reversal, for *not* stealing anything from the house.[72] Daos' ethnicity is put to humorous use again. The waiter calls him ἀπόπληκτος (239) for not running away with all the booty.[73] Wherever does he come from? - The answer sounds like a joke compared to Daos' behaviour up to now: Phrygia.

On the way to market

Just as the novelty of the cook's departure from the scene is novel, so now we see Smikrines decide that he will go to the market for a very unusual reason. He will try to find his brother Chairestratos and ask him to call off the wedding. The pattern of going to the *agora* or *forum* is often exploited as an optimistic preparation for a feast, mostly for a wedding celebration. Interestingly, it is not Daos but Smikrines who goes to call Chairestratos home. This shows his eagerness to speed things up, and at the same time his 'ignorance' of the generically loaded sign that the market place is.

The pimp in Plaut. *Pseudolus* 168ff. is eager to speed up preparations for his birthday party and he even goes to the *forum* personally. Smikrines' exit in that direction is in striking contrast to a typically happy symbol that usually leads to a comic resolution. One may return home loaded with utensils and foodstuff, a complaint or two about ἰχθυοπῶλαι, and frequently also with a garrulous and unbearably inquisitive cook.[74]

Aspis stands that convention on its head: Smikrines goes to the *agora* to fetch Chairestratos and have him call off the wedding now underway (211ff.). The cook's exit from the stage house just then, leaving for good and heading back to the *agora*, nicely complements this sense of a complete reversal of what is usually done on the wedding day.[75]

Act II sees on stage Smikrines and two so far unfamiliar characters. Soon Smikrines' partner in conversation is identified as Chairestratos. That Chaireas is with them is not immediately obvious from the text since he does not join their conversation for over thirty lines (not until 284).[76] Smikrines, just like Daos at the beginning of the previous act, is in the middle of breaking the news of Kleostratos' death to a member of the family. He did not hurry to find his brother only to inform him of Kleostratos' death – rather, the entrance from the *agora* creates a scene comparable to others in comedies where a person brings with him from the *agora* a friend, intriguer, cook – anyone to help with his plans; mostly when the plan concerns wedding preparations. Smikrines' activity reminds us of such a motivation. He asks what his brother thinks of the situation: εἶέν· τί δή μοι νῦν λέγεις, Χαιρέστρατε; (250) We know he is not giving Chairestratos a choice. The audience have already heard what Smikrines thinks is

appropriate now that the word of Kleostratos' death has arrived: *ἴσως μὲν ἄτοπον καὶ λέγειν· οὐκ ἐν γάμοις / ἐστὶν γὰρ ἥκοντος τοιούτου νῦν λόγου* (160f.).

Smikrines' 'restaging' of the opening scene of Act I brings into turmoil the wedding preparations in the family – those preparations that should have been symbolized by Chairestratos' optimistic arrival from the *agora* with the provisions. At the same time, Smikrines' own thoughts of the wedding are symbolically foreshadowed here in this scene: he is bringing from the *agora* the man who is essential for the execution of his plan to marry the *epikleros* girl. But Chairestratos tactfully insists that it is essential to be first concerned with the funeral preparations: *πρῶτον μέν, ὦ βέλτιστε, τὰ περὶ τὴν ταφὴν / δεῖ πραγματευθῆναι* (251f.). 'It will be done' - Smikrines spares just two words on that topic. Impatiently and insensitively, he cuts to the chase and warns his brother not to promise the girl to any suitor. Smikrines says that just as Chairestratos has a wife and daughter so he himself now wants to have a family too. Chairestratos can only appeal to Smikrines' sense of moderation by pointing out to him his old age.[77] He offers to give Smikrines all the war booty if only he lets Chaireas, the boy who grew up with the girl, marry her.[78]

Smikrines does not want to observe the rules of (comic) *decorum*. He is the opposite of what an appropriate and worthy (*κατάξιος*, cf. 9) groom should be like.[79] Aware of the possible legal trap in Chairestratos' offer of the booty, he objects that the child born from the marriage between Chaireas and Kleostratos' sister could sue him for the property that legally belongs to the child. Throughout the play, Smikrines is acquainted with the law. This is not only probable and realistic in the case of property and inheritance laws but it also allows Menander a chance to follow the tradition that goes back to Aristophanes and his legally very self-conscious old men (as e.g. Philokleon is in *Vespae*).

Smikrines is legally in the right, leaving Chairestratos no option but to accept his plan; he also asks to have Daos sent to his house to calculate the amount of the booty. Whereas a normal wedding would effect a unification of the stage houses (most explicitly in Ter. *Ad.*), in this play the two stage houses become as remote one from the other as ever. When Smikrines goes back to his own house, Chairestratos is desperate. He hardly stumbles to his own house, leaving Chaireas on stage alone. When Chairestratos, Daos and Chaireas are on stage together in the next scene, they consider how best to ward off Smikrines' attack.

The intrigue forced by shameful Smikrines

The intrigue is the most remarkable and popular part of *Aspis*. No wonder: Daos suggests a bold scheme based on staging a tragic charade to fool avaricious Smikrines. This element of the play has therefore drawn much attention. This is a bold example of art imitating art while pretending it imitates life. A subtle commentary on playwriting has been rightly seen behind the tragic show staged by Daos. The intrigue devised by Daos, however, also bears a striking resemblance to the external comic pattern in *Aspis* itself, and therefore the intrigue may also be seen to comment on the dramatic working methods of the comic genre itself.[80]

To make Smikrines lose interest in Kleostratos' booty, Daos thinks up a scheme that entails pretending there has been a death in the house with all the typical tragic embellishments and staging. Apart from the explicit metatheatre of staging a tragic show, the play's aspect of interesting *metaconstruction* becomes obvious. Daos and the intriguers act on the lower level of knowledge control, thinking that they are creating a novel situation, nonexistent and outrageous in its incredible suddenness and comic exaggeration. It is beyond their knowledge that the same 'show' has been staged by Tyche who made the audience aware of the fact at the exposition of the external play. There is the irony of intriguers not having all the facts, of being subsumed in a larger context of dramatic plotting. However, looking at this from a different angle, there is more irony than just not knowing what Tyche is up to. 'Her plot' loses its seriousness and threatens to become conventional by the very intrigue hatched by Daos: the intriguers can think of an equally good plot as the *spiritus movens* and this puts Tyche and the whole external comic plot into a humorously embarrassing position.

I find this unusual construction of the play to be the key to the problem of why Menander should not have minded unifying two emotionally very discrepant threads into one play[81]: on the one hand, there is a gloomy beginning of the play with a suggestion of death; on the other, it is Daos' eventual 'forgetting' of the gloomy atmosphere when he becomes fully absorbed in devising and executing the lighter intrigue that pushes this fact to the background.

Invocation of the *spiritus movens*

Before we move on to discuss the nature of the intrigue, let us once more remember that Tyche maintained that she governs all the action in the play. Tyche is an ambiguous entity. In real life, it is common to invoke her as both a principle and a goddess. In this play, she declares herself a rational force that creates, organizes and moves the events of the play as she wishes (with necessary help from the individual characters, as we will see).[82]

Tyche and Venus, Arcturus, Pan, Lar or any other divine power is positively on the side of the 'good' characters, as a character in Menander's *Pallake* makes clear: *ἀλλὰ τῶν χρηστῶν ἔχει τιν' ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ θεός* (*Pallake* fr. 283 K-A). This is part of the system of comedy's natural appropriation of the universal laws of retribution, reward and punishment where it is due. This plainly strives to fit the satisfying rules of Poetic Justice into the pattern of perceived real-life forces.[83]

Some of the humour lies precisely in the awareness that it is perfectly common in both real life and drama for Tyche to be mentioned. Here she is not an irrational 'physical' principle of the universe or of dramatic necessity but a sentient goddess capable of 'staging a play'. Whenever a dramatic problem arises, she is invoked by a character. The following fragment, no longer believed to be by Menander[84] expresses this sentiment nicely:

ὅταν τις ἡμῶν † ἀμέριμνον † ἔχῃ τὸν βίον,
οὐκ ἐπικαλεῖται τὴν τύχην εὐδαιμονῶν·
ὅταν δὲ λύπαις περιπέσῃ καὶ πράγμασιν,
εὐθὺς προσάπτει τῇ τύχῃ τὴν αἰτίαν.

Daos' sad lament for his unfortunate fate is shaped as a direct address to the goddess at 213ff. From such a good master he finds himself now in Smikrines' hands.[85] Why did he deserve it? Such a mention of Tyche may somehow relieve the tension of the '*periculum fabulae*'. Daos in his frustration virtually puts himself in her hands and we do not doubt that Tyche will actually take care of this man and his problems.[86]

Another common sentiment connected with Tyche follows when Daos sees the tipsy revellers that make up the chorus. Daos praises their good sense for they enjoy

life and the good fortune that can so easily change for the worse. ὄχλον ἄλλον ἀνθρώπων προσιόντα τουτονὶ / ὁρῶ μεθυόντων. νοῦν ἔχετε· τὸ τῆς τύχης / ἄδηλον· εὐφραίνεσθ' ὃν ἔξεστιν χρόνον (247ff.). The melancholy sentiment – the flower of youth and its pleasures, in fact the whole of life, last only for a brief span of time – is to be found in numerous passages of ancient Greek poetry. The only sensible solution then is to enjoy life, drink and be happy, for it would be presumptuous to expect happiness to last. Such admonitions are not contained just in melancholy Mimnermos and in the outlook of archaic Greek poetry. The sentiment could be passed off as literary and gnomic; here, however, it gains in impact because the goddess behind the literary cliché also happens to mastermind the play.

The revellers also symbolize the *komastic* mood so typical of the ending of many comedies. Gutzwiller calls the komasts 'prototypically comic - an enactment of license and mirth as a mirror for the audience's pleasure in the play.'[87] In that respect, Daos' approval of their behaviour also works as a reminder of the positive ending (feasting and wedding celebrations) that Daos perceives as lost for good now that Kleostratos is thought dead.

Many comedies depict a sudden and satisfactory change in fortune during the course of the play: from good fortune to bad, or, in the case of wicked characters, the reverse. In this play, everyone's eventual fortune depends on how they view the initial situation: for Smikrines, Kleostratos' 'loss' is a gain, *hermaion*, a piece of good luck. The rest of the characters sincerely lament Kleostratos' death because it has destroyed their personal ambitions and aspirations. The misfortune is a blow to their happiness. The characters' reactions thus categorize them for us, and their role in the play becomes obvious through their individual assessments of what Kleostratos' alleged death has caused.

At the most exposed place, his first speech on stage, Chaireas laments his bad luck: οὐδὲ εἷς / τούτων γὰρ οὕτως ἠτύχηκεν ὡς ἐγώ. / ἔρωτι περιπεσὼν γὰρ οὐκ αὐθαιρέτωι... (286ff.) Kleostratos' apparent death and Smikrines' greed stand in the way of his marriage with a girl he loves. The infatuation is presented as a force that he had no control over: it was sent by a god (Eros, he probably means). The lament portrays him as a passive sufferer of two unwanted 'blows': the first one was the love affair that a god sent him; the second is the present denial of the fulfilment of that love.

The choice of the words makes it clear that he is almost a puppet in the hands of gods.[88]

***ὤιμην*: parallelism that paves the way for the intrigue**

Before moving on to the execution of the intrigue I want to draw attention to a particular parallelism that can be found in this play, that paves the way for the intrigue. It is important as a comment on how a play should properly be moving in order to reach its resolution, raising questions about the proper development of the play.

Kleostratos' alleged death makes many characters frustrated because their hopes now seem to have been thwarted. The audience note that their expressions of this all seem to have a similar form, and even though they are uttered independently there is a bit of humour in their uniformity. They address the blatant disregard for what the comic play should look like and why it is that it does not follow along the prescribed generic lines.

Plays cannot violate poetic justice and the working rules of the genre, and thus too frequent and too ostentatious laments of the violation of poetic rules can fulfil the function of foreshadowing for us the plot developments. The audience watch a character voice his frustrations, but at the same time they recognize the rules of the genre and wonder how the lamented reality can be reconciled with the required ending. Even if I do not claim the ending should be at all costs dogmatically prescribed, still it needs to satisfy their expectations of, say, a *komastic* ending, a love affair fulfilled in some form of relationship, and so on.

Firstly, as we have observed already, it is Daos' sincere lament that opens the play. It presents a dramatic paradox that seems to violate the rules of a proper comic ending:

ὤιμην γὰρ εὐδο[ξο]ῦντα καὶ σωθέντα σε
ἀπὸ στρατείας ἐν βίωι τ' εὐσχήμονι
ἤδη τὸ λοιπὸν καταβιώσεσθαί τινι,
στρατηγὸν ἢ σύμβουλον ὠνομασμένον,
καὶ τὴν ἀδελφήν, ἥσπερ ἐξώρμας τότε
ἕνεκα, σεαυτοῦ νυμφίωι καταξίωι
συνοικιεῖν ποθεινὸν ἥκοντ' οἴκαδε... (4ff.)

Once we realize that the things he had hoped for are too important for poetic justice to be irretrievably lost, we may instead tend to look at his lament as an ironic hint at the future developments in the plot. What other comedies work towards, Daos explicitly excludes as lost for good. The ambiguity of the scene lies in the awareness that for this comedy to work, the seemingly hopeless ending must *necessarily* be reinvented and reinstalled along those very lines that Daos sees now as irretrievably lost.

Another character who questions his role in this play and voices his frustration is the cook. He hoped to fulfil a typical role that is expected of him in New Comedy plots: he was to prepare the wedding feast for the marriage between Kleostratos' sister and Chaireas. Now that the news of Kleostratos' death has arrived, he must conform to the situation that causes him financial harm:

δραχμῶν τριῶν ἦλθον δι' ἡμερῶν δέκα
ἔργον λαβών· ὤιμην ἔχειν ταύτας· νεκρὸς
ἐλθών τις ἐκ Λυκίας ἀφήιρηται βίαι... (223ff)

The cook's frustration may ironically hint at the future reversal of his bad fortune: it is not inconceivable that he appears on stage again, during the two weddings at the end of the play (so e.g. Arnott, Jacques, Lloyd-Jones) The weddings do seem to take place off stage, but the cook may narrate them to the audience.[89]

We cannot be sure if Chairestratos used a similar verbal formula to express his frustrations as the characters before him did. It is clear, however, from 278ff. that even he has found all his hopes completely wrecked by the sad accident of Kleostratos' alleged death:

ἐμὲ.[ὠιόμην
]εις σὲ μὲν λαβόντα ταύτη.[ν
αὐτὸν δ' ἐκεῖνον τὴν ἐμὴν.[
ὑμᾶς καταλείψειν τῆς ἐμαυτοῦ κυρίους.
ἀπαλλαγῆναι τὴν ταχίστην τοῦ βίου
γένοιτό μοι πρὶν ἰδεῖν ἃ μήποτ' ἤλπισα (278ff.)
278f. ὠιόμην / ἀεὶ σὲ μὲν λαβόντα ταύτην, Χαιρέα Austin

For the first time we hear explicitly that Chairestratos had hoped for a wedding between his daughter and Kleostratos.[90] By now, we know that Kleostratos is alive and so the wish is more than just empty words that would no longer matter. They must be taken more seriously.

Chaireas is the next one to lament his fate. In a sharp contrast with Smikrines' insensitivity, he begins by lamenting Kleostratos' fate and then continues lamenting his own: it was not of his free will to fall in love with the girl. He did nothing hasty, he duly asked permission to marry her. ὥιμην δὲ μακάριός τις εἶναι τῶι βίωι (294ff): again for reasons of Poetic Justice we could not possibly expect the boy to remain unmarried, that is, without poetically justified μακαρία. We thus know he will get a wife, even if that in itself is not very interesting: the more interesting problem is *how* this will happen, and the fact that Menander keeps alluding to it throughout.

It is worth pointing out that all of the above-mentioned laments and frustrations point to either a marriage that will not apparently materialize or to a promise of a happy life that so many comedies end with. It is as if the whole verbal parallelism and the repetition of the laments was there for the sake of the audience who can appreciate the paradox of knowing that the genre requires exactly such a happy marriage (or two) and a satisfactory resolution that the characters now deny the possibility of materializing.

Another character who mentions the power of luck on his first entrance is the allegedly dead master Kleostratos when he finally arrives home. ὁ Δᾶος, εὐτυχῶς[(497) immediately introduces him to the audience as the master that Daos thought he had lost. He gives us a new perspective different from the one we got from Daos at the beginning of the play. For the first time Daos' survival and preservation of the booty are seen as *fortunate* by a character other than the greedy Smikrines.[91]

We may now move on to discuss that part of the play that will assure the happy-ending. Part of the charade lies in pretending that a tragedy has happened. Not just 'tragedy' in the sense of a misfortune, but almost a 'tragedy' that exactly follows the conventions of the tragic *genre* that may deal with the occurrence of (alleged) death and subsequent staging of a corpse laid out in front of the doorway. From a different perspective, the comic intrigue in *Aspis* not only imitates a generically tragic situation, but also alludes to dramas that play with the motive, such as Sophocles' *Electra* where a similar stratagem of a false report of death is used.[92] Finally, tragedy is on the slave's

lips. During the charade, 'the play within the play' Daos uses tragic quotations from familiar and popular plays - he even names the source from which he got them. Thus in the confidence typical of a schemer, he does not feel afraid of unmasking his 'show' by his cold intertextualism.

In the quotations Daos uses, Tyche has her place too, as the goddess revered by tragic playwrights who moves the situation from bad fortune to good fortune: *οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις π[άντ' ἀνὴρ εὐδαιμονεῖ* (407, from Eur. fr. 661N^2), *τύχη τὰ θνητῶν πράγματ' οὐκ εὐβουλία* (411), and again: *ἐν μιᾶι γὰρ ἡμέραι / τὸν εὐτυχῆ τίθησι δυστυχῆ θεός* (417f.).

Menander allows Daos to make fun of the principle of so many tragedies, the principle that even forms the basis of this very play – the changeability of fortune. The intrigue itself and the quotations used during it are a humorous comment on the dramatic method, on the prerequisites of the genre. For a moment, it is as if Tyche was subsumed into a metadramatic statement made by Daos, who is right in seeing her conventionalised place in drama (both tragedy and comedy). Tyche, the goddess moving this play, becomes a butt of jokes by a character in it! It seems as if a character within the play for a moment laughed with Menander at the way things really work in drama. However, Tyche had the last laugh, it seems, because in a larger context Daos' intrigue did not bring about the happy ending – it was left to Tyche to tie all the knots and have Kleostratos back at home.[93] Tyche, in the end, must be with you to *win*: *οὐδεὶς δὲ νικᾶι μὴ θελούσης τῆς τύχης* (adesp. fr. *882K-A).[94]

The interesting thing about the intrigue is the natural way in which the intriguers arrive at it as if Tyche helped them stumble upon it. The scheme almost forces itself on the schemers as a self-evident solution.[95]

When Smikrines went into his house, Chairestratos' depression unexpectedly developed. Verses 282f. show his depressive disposition growing worse and worse in this extreme situation.[96] He probably collapsed in the doorway, leaving Chaireas on stage alone for a short monologue.[97] Soon, Daos will run to his master's succour, calling even Chaireas to help. This visually prepares for the slave's involvement in saving Chairestratos. It is nothing unusual for a young person in utter distress to express a wish to die.[98] Amusingly enough, it is not the enamoured Chaireas that expresses such a wish here, but an older Chairestratos (282, repeated again at 314). His exaggerated behaviour is rather out of place. It is not even for any unfulfilled love affair of his that Chairestratos feels suicidal. It seems Chairestratos' condition worsens

because his own brother's shamelessness destroys the happiness of a young couple and shatters their prospect of a marriage. It is accepted that grief has dangerous effects on health.[99] Such sentiments were put even to a dramatic use. In a fragment of Philemon's we find it expressed as follows: *πολλῶν φύσει τοῖς πᾶσιν αἰτία κακῶν / λύπη· διὰ λύπην καὶ μανία γὰρ γίγνεται / πολλοῖσι καὶ νοσήματ' οὐκ ἰάσιμα...* (Philemon *incert*. fr. 106.1ff. K-A)

The staging may emphasize the inappropriateness of such behaviour if it has Chairestratos fainting and collapsing (cf. 299).[100] Moreover, such a collapse may remind the audience of the staging that resembles tragic genre as this fragment makes evident: *καὶ πεσεῖν τι βούλομαι / τραγικὸν πέσημα* (*adesp*. fr. 159 K-A)

In the next scene, Chairestratos makes it for the stage supported by attendants.[101] Full of black bile, he is unable to control his emotions. He tells Daos of Smikrines' ambition to marry the girl. The slave casts away tact and calls the greedy old man *μιαρώτατος*. From this point on, he becomes a much more active hero of the play pondering how Smikrines is to be beaten: ΔΑ. *πῶς ἂν οὖν / τοῦ σφόδρα πονηροῦ περιγένοιτό τις: πάνυ / ἐργῶδες*[102]. *ἐργῶδες μέν, ἀλλ' ἔνεσθ' ὅμως* (315ff.). A man so focused on one thing only, says Daos, will be easy to fool (326f. remind us of Tyche's words at 119f.).[103] Daos' disgust at Smikrines and the old man's insensitivity to the young couple's prospects only to gain shameless profit for himself, arouses Daos' *ἐπιμέλεια* for the family. He now takes an active approach being no longer the passive person who lamented his fate and reproached Tyche for it. Even his behaviour gains in the features associated with active leading slaves: his reply to Chairestratos 'if you are not thick' (*εἰ μὴ πέτρινος εἶ*, 353) would sound appropriate in the mouth of a self-confident schemer mocking his slow-witted master.[104]

Smikrines wanted to have Daos sent to his house – instead, Daos remains on stage engaged with Chairestratos and Chaireas in devising a scheme. Daos is not sent to Smikrines and this clearly hints at who begins at last to control the situation on stage. Chaireas is sent to the *agora* to find his friend who will help them with the ruse. The exit in the direction of the *agora* is optimistic and in a sharp contrast to the earlier entrance from the *agora* (Chairestratos, Smikrines, Chaireas). Things start moving quickly (379 *ταχὺ μὲν οὖν*) in an optimistic expectation of the scheme.

The ruse, as has been observed, originates from, and interferes with, the given reality within the play. It adds another perspective to the performance, another level to

the universe of the play, creating a certain 'real-life' plasticity. Just as at the beginning of the play Daos was mistaken (and still is) about the alleged death of his master, so now when the time comes for the intrigue against Smikrines, we have a mirror situation with small modifications.[105]

The ignorance of dramatic characters moves the play, the audience realize that the characters could just as well say: ἅπαντές ἐσμεν πρὸς τὰ θεῖ' ἀβέλτεροι, κοὐκ ἴσμεν οὐδέν (Anaxandrides, fr. 22 K-A). For the first time in the play, however, Daos is not here an ignorant puppet of the situation that he cannot control because his knowledge is flawed. This time he himself will stage a mock-tragic piece to move the domestic situation in a new direction. The intrigue will lie in simulating Chairestratos' death to fool Smikrines.[106]

A dramatically ironical parallel is clear from the verbal echoes with the opening of the play. Daos foresees that Smikrines, keen on gain, will surely rush to his downfall completely unaware that he is being fooled. Overall, it will be easy to mislead such a character (διημαρτηκότ', 324), Tyche used a similar word about Daos and his mistaken identification of his master's body (διημάρτηκεν 110).

The intrigue occurs to Daos when he sees Chairestratos' depression: he suggests pretending that Chairestratos is dead. This would possibly put Smikrines off Chaireas' girlfriend and instead make him seek to lay his hands on Chairestratos' *epikleros* girl and the property she would inherit from Chairestratos. He will want to marry her and leave Kleostratos' sister to whoever shows interest in her. After such a U-turn Chairestratos will 'rise from the dead' and Smikrines' true colours will be exposed in full view. For the intrigue to be successful, Daos will have to make sure that everyone follows his 'directorial' instructions and that even Smikrines' stage movements conform to Daos' plan: 'we will take care that he (Smikrines) does not come anywhere near the dummy representing your corpse' (359ff.).[107]

The stage house becomes the stronghold, a kind of fortified bastion for the intrigue, and only those in the house will have detailed knowledge of the facts: the 'patient' will have to remain shut inside, the women in the house will know of the scheme, Smikrines will have to be kept away (cf. 383ff.). This may perhaps hint at the concept of the theatrical backstage: even there everyone may be imagined to be observing what goes on onstage, with full recognition of the situation on stage and control over entrances, exits, even the timing of the delivery of particular lines.

Daos creates a new dramatic character for the play: as part of the charade, a witty impostor will arrive, pretending to be a foreign doctor. Daos asks Chaireas if he knows any doctor who would foot the bill. Chaireas does not, but suggests bringing one of his friends dressed and acting as a foreign doctor. We may reasonably expect a charade with a doctor who does not know his *techne* properly, something along the lines of Doric farce.[108]

Daos controls the stage exits and entrances and the movement on stage just as Tyche was seen controlling them. He even guesses what Smikrines' movements will be like when he suspects that all Chairestratos' property has come under his control (356ff.). The fact that the slave can manipulate and even foresee the exits, entrances, and movements on stage, is a visual sign of his control over the intrigue, of being in the power to which even his masters must succumb.[109] Chairestratos approves of the intrigue and asks what he should be doing. Daos suggests following the plan and… dying *ἀγαθῇι τύχηι*.[110] The light touch in his speech continues the portrayal of a jesting leading slave. It also reminds us of another Daos - the one in *Georgos*, with his witty, naughty, and jesting conversation with Myrrhine (40ff).

Chairestratos bids the accomplices Daos and Chaireas to keep the plan secret with all determination: *ἀλλὰ τηρεῖτ' ἀνδρικῶς / τὸ πρᾶγμα* (382f.). We may remember that Daos was earlier labelled *ἀνδρόγυνος* (242) by the waiter who denigrated his capacity to do anything serious, daring and masculine.

If the doctor is credible, the charade will prove exciting.[111] We are left in anticipation of what the doctor will be like. The intrigue, while still being in preparation, is presented by the schemers as a very unforeseeable enterprise. They cannot, they claim, be certain that the 'sham acting' will be convincing or that the lines will be delivered at the right time and with enough impact. The schemers in such a precarious moment give a semblance of an impromptu play. This sentiment gives vividness to the intrigue, as the here-and-now show that never existed before this moment. It also addresses the instability of the dramatic performance as a whole and gives us a feeling that the play is not a linear event moving from the made-up beginning to the prescribed (compulsory) ending. The intrigue gives it a sense that the direction can change – even get lost. Questions are raised about play-acting. *Nunc ego poeta fiam,* says the schemer Pseudolus in Plautus' eponymous play (404). He sees himself as a dramatic poet who finds the subject matter in his own inspiration. The

protagonist must overcome a serious obstacle and rely only on his ability. He must count on unexpected reversals of fortune or accidents. In short, he envisages a real battle to achieve the desired goal. The preparation for the intrigue concentrates our attention, heightens the sense of danger, and makes us wonder what the execution of the intrigue will be like. How the intrigue comes off, and how it fits in the successful plot, is indeed what influences the audience's appreciation of the performance as a whole. At the end of *Dyskolos* Getas says: *συνησθέντες κατηγωνισμένοις ἡμῖν τὸν ἐργώδη γέροντα, φιλοφρόνως μειράκια, παῖδες, ἄνδρες ἐπικροτήσατε.* (965ff.). As if the *agon* (*κατηγωνισμένοις*) and nothing else was of importance in the summing up of the charms of that play! In *Aspis* it is the ruse against Smikrines that likewise should constitute the principal part of the play.

For a similar emphasis on the intrigue in the play, one may compare Eur. *Hecuba* (1258). Hecuba seems to forget for a moment the personal calamities she has suffered during the course of an hour and instead focuses all her attention on revenge. She rejoices at seeing Polymestor punished for his wrongdoing, pushing the deaths of her children into the background of her consciousness. That the play should end with such a strange emphasis on revenge and a successful intrigue despite all the other sentiments that this tragedy depicted, is perhaps more surprising to a modern critic than to a contemporary Greek spectator.

After the choral interlude, Smikrines comes on stage angry with Daos for not bringing him the inventory of the booty despite asking Chairestratos earlier to send him over (274f.). Right before the intrigue Smikrines' remarks must strike the audience as highly ironic: *πολύ τ' ἐμοῦ πεφρόντικε* (392). In an offended way, he complains that Daos did not think much of his order. The reason must be, so he thinks, that Daos sides with Chairestratos' household against Smikrines' interests: *Δᾶος μετὰ τούτων ἐστίν* (393). The audience saw before the break that this is in fact true, much to Smikrines' harm. It is obvious that the control of information and space that Smikrines aspired to is lost. Smikrines is on stage alone, the house next door is silent and we expect it to explode into the charade any minute now.

After Smikrines has voiced his suspicions concerning Daos' loyalty, Daos, as if on cue, rushes on stage in frenzy.[112] In a state of pretended excitement, he runs across the stage paying attention not to notice Smikrines. The old man must keep at the slave's heels if he wants to know what has happened. Just as throughout the play Smikrines

lacks enough information, so now he is shown as trying to get to the source of the facts and learn from Daos the reason for his wild, 'barbarian' agitation.

Daos begins with an invocation of gods, especially Helios. Tragic heroes often declared their dreams, thoughts, and fears to the Sun-god (e.g. Soph. *Electra* 424) because there was no other way of making them known to the audience and someone else on stage. The poet uses the technique to let others overhear what one would not have said had he known there was someone else present near him. In *Aspis*, Daos *wants* to be overheard, exactly controlling how much Smikrines hears.[113]

In the report of Casina's madness (Plaut. *Casina* 620ff.), styled after tragic laments, the scene comes without warning; Pardalisca will therefore later have to explain to spectators what is going on (at 693ff.). In *Aspis*, the charade was prepared for and expected by the audience. Perhaps that is why Daos can continue his fooling and teasing for a longer time than Pardalisca. Unlike him, she immediately answers when the master calls her.

Instead of veiling his information in decent and serious language, Daos goes over the top. He uses polished tragic quotations as only a person detached from the sentiments being expressed here could. The quotations he uses come from the perfectly familiar *Stheneboia* by Euripides, and *Achilleus Thersitoktonos* by the fourth-century star playwright Chairemon. Aeschylos, Karkinos, Euripides, Chairemon are acknowledged by name. Gutzwiller (2000, 130) notes that at least one of these lines (Eur. *Stheneboeia* fr. 661N^2) 'began its afterlife through an initial use as comic parody.' This increases the comic element in the charade that pretends to be tragedy.

Vysoký[114] maintains that Daos voices the tragic maxims 'in order to fool Smikrines and save time for Chairestratos and Chaireas so that they may prepare and execute the cunning plan' [my translation]. I suspect that he looks at Daos' motives from a very realistic point of view that is perhaps out of place in a scene of hilarious charade. Chaireas and Chairestratos may equally well be imagined as already following from offstage what goes on onstage, having had enough time to fetch the 'doctor' during the choral break. The choral break would no doubt relieve any improbability.

Smikrines in *Epitrepontes* is credited with the knowledge of tragedy by the charcoal burner: τεθέασαι τραγωιδούς, οἶδ' ὅτι, / καὶ ταῦτα κατέχεις πάντα... (325f.) This Smikrines, too, should be aware of the verses that Daos is using. Indeed, the charade is

more hilarious if the fooling is thinly disguised from Smikrines, if the knowledge of the tragic repertoire – that must be expected of the *senex* – threatens to make Smikrines suspicious. And indeed, he is not at first taken in by what goes on around him and he voices his suspicion: *γνωμολογεῖς, τρισάθλιε;* (414)[115] It is funny how Daos treats the tragic repertoire. He uses it openly and blatantly, he adds the sources of the theatrical experience from which he took the lines, some of them highly popular and so the audience may be perhaps imagined as possessing knowledge of this repertoire. The element of a long-drawn-out teasing in *Aspis* is made even more hilarious by showing that there is a danger that Smikrines will recognize that a tragic show is being performed for him, not 'enacted in earnest' from the point of view of characters. Smikrines is not stupid and he will not lose his calm easily.

How shall I say it? Your brother is at death's door.' - 'The one who was speaking to me here?' (ΔΑ. *ἀδελφός* - *ὦ* Ζεῦ, *πῶς φράσω*: - *σχεδόν τι σου / τέθνηκεν*. ΣΜ. *ὁ λαλῶν ἀρτίως ἐνταῦθ' ἐμοί;* 420ff.) Indeed, fortune can change quickly in both comedy and tragedy, but *so* quickly?! 'What happened to him?' Smikrines asks. Daos retains the superiority that characterizes a trickster and to the series of tragic quotations he adds a catalogue of illnesses that Chairestratos is allegedly beset by all of a sudden. Smikrines is terrified (note his oath by Poseidon at 423 that is often used in moments of utmost shock). Daos 'consoles' him with the famous opening line of Euripides' immensely popular *Orestes*: it seems that his pretence will never end but, on the contrary, keeps increasing.

'Was the doctor fetched?' Smikrines asks (cf. 428ff.). 'No, Chaireas went to fetch one.' 'Whom?' Smikrines wonders with us. At exactly that moment, Chaireas, as if on cue, arrives with the false doctor. Though perfectly well motivated, such an opportune arrival at *exactly* that moment must have an explanation. The only plausible one is that Chaireas observed the situation from offstage with the doctor that he fetched during the choral interlude. Of course, complete realism is not the goal and is not even sought during the rapid tempo of the charade.

In Soph. *Philoctetes,* Odysseus rushes on stage exactly at the moment when Neoptolemus is overcome with compassion for Philoctetes and deliberates returning the bow to him (975) - and it gives the impression Odysseus was overlooking the situation on stage from offstage. As if the character off-stage listened to what was going on onstage and in an opportune moment burst into full view to partake in the

intrigue or abort it. The sudden entrance on stage of another 'director', Lysistrata, at exactly the moment when the Magistrate is asking about her (430), is a similar example of coming out after the imagined 'eavesdropping from the inside'.[116]

The doctor plausibly hurries right into the house so that Smikrines may think he wishes to help Chairestratos as quickly as possible. From another perspective, this may be a hint that he still needs to be instructed in what to say before confronting Smikrines. His words will echo Daos' list of made up illnesses (339ff. cf. 439ff. and 446)[117] and this supports the idea that also this meaning may be read into his quick entrance into the stage house along with the other intriguers: Daos and Chaireas (who is again not acknowledged by Smikrines).

The entrance of Daos, Chaireas, and doctor into the house is ironic and meaningful. While everyone goes inside the house, Smikrines cuts a sorry figure waiting outside (cf. *Perik*. 299ff.). His personality helps the intriguers fool him. He does not want to go into Chairestratos' house to see for himself what state his brother is in. He is reasonably afraid that in that house they may suspect him of hidden and ulterior motives and that Chairestratos himself would not like to see him anyway after their mutual row. In this situation, Smikrines is unable to find out the explicit truth, just as at the beginning of the play, no matter how much he may have wanted to learn what *really* happened to Kleostratos, he had to rely on the facts as Daos presented them to him. His anti-social qualities prevent him now from spoiling the dramatic effect and the intrigue by prying into the information that must stay concealed from him. He wants to learn the facts and possess the knowledge that would put him in a better position to judge the situation – but his character is to blame for the fact that he cannot do what he wants.

When the doctor comes back on stage from the house, Smikrines engages him in conversation. 'Is there no chance of recovery?'[118] Smikrines does not want any cheering up: 'speak the truth!' The doctor says Chairestratos 'is not likely to live' (449f.) But Smikrines gets more than he wanted: the doctor says something like 'you'll never live the same again' (458). Does he mean that once this intrigue is over Smikrines will be doomed to ridicule and contempt? Sham doctors may have tried to lay their hands on money or any other gain. Philemon's *Iatros* (fr. 35 K-A) *may* hint in that direction if we may hazard a guess by one particular line: *καὶ γυλιόν τιν' ἀργυρωμάτων*. It is intriguing but unfortunately uncertain whether we should see a

connection between a false doctor and a 'walletful of silver plate.' If indeed there was such a connection, then the sham doctor of *Aspis* gains in depth by comparison with that play and perhaps some other as well. A doctor would be in a not so unusual role of helping to fool an old man out of his money - for poetically satisfactory reasons, for once.

Smikrines remains cold and calculating in the face of the sudden illness that befell his brother – he even suspects that others behave in a greedy way like himself and are not lamenting the two sudden deaths. Instead, he imagines them as looting all the property that they can lay their hands on in the house. This insensitivity psychologically prepares us for the final stages of humiliation and punishment that Smikrines must suffer. Of this, unfortunately, we know nothing at all.[119]

In Act IV Smikrines must have learnt of Chairestratos' alleged death, and possibly betrothed Kleostratos' sister to Chaireas. I assume, with Arnott, that Smikrines was at that time on stage talking with Chaireas. This would give Menander a chance to show a seeming U-turn in Smikrines' attitude towards the boy: from indifference to the boy who was an obstacle to Smikrines' plans (cf. *οὐκ οἶδ' ὅτωι* at 177) to apparent goodwill when Chaireas is no longer seen as an impediment to Smikrines' greater ambitions. Perhaps he even added something about wishing the young bridegroom well, giving him the girl so that he may harbour no hard feelings against him, and so on. All this would appear very philanthropic if we did not know of his true intentions. Thinking he could easily become the owner of an even bigger dowry, he will plan to marry an even richer *epikleros* girl than Kleostratos' sister.

Menander seems to have been interested in exploring the humour that comes with a sudden, sometimes seemingly irrational U-turn in a character's fortune or behaviour. Parallels to a barefaced reversal of attitude when the situation has changed can be found in a Roman adaptation of a Menandrean play, *Stichus*. Antipho tries to convice his two daughters that they should leave their absent husbands and look elsewhere for a more profitable match. When in the course of the play the two husbands arrive back home rich after a successful business trip, Antipho changes his attitude so completely and wholeheartedly that it does not escape notice (cf. Epignomus' remarks, 408ff.).

Of the ending of *Aspis* we know little. 527ff. shows lively swearing that may prove a cook is on stage, but the evidence is not clinching. We do learn of the double weddings (*γά]νεται διπλοῦς γάμος* 521), i.e. that of Kleostratos with Chairestratos'

daughter and of Chaireas with Kleostratos' sister. Perhaps Daos or some other character who earlier expressed his frustration may now have voiced something along the lines of *Koneiazomenai* 13ff. Arnott's interpretation of that lacunose text seems fitting:

> '*I've not done right to rail at Lady Luck. I have perhaps abused her, called her blind, but now she's saved me – clearly she can see! I really toiled, but my toils achieved nothing worthwhile. I'd not have gained success without her help. And so let no one, please, ever be too despondent if he fails. That* may *become an agent of good fortune!*'

The weddings to ensue must have been seen a resolution of the plot complications and the tangible proof of victory. It would be a nice (and not uncommon) rounding off of the play if Daos (as the intriguer) devised some farcical ruse (with the cook?) to punish Smikrines now that Kleostratos is at home. The person who exacted punishment from Smikrines may have perhaps concluded it with an admonition similar to what we find in *Dyskolos* (960ff.).[120]

This paper has brought to the forefront of our attention only some of the aspects that Menandrean plays show in their constantly fascinating interplay of convention and variety.[121] Throughout his production, so far as we can follow it, Menander seems to have a firm grasp of the overall structure of his play, but also shows a remarkable eye for details, whether of staging, characterization of individual *dramatis personae*, or of implicit communication with the audience by hinting at various levels of, and problems with, 'realism', plausibility and motivation within a comic play.

Aspis, with its neat construction full of mirror scenes, parallel behaviour patterns and unmistakable dramatic statements on the art of creating a drama, shows that New Comedy is an intelligent art form that – in order to pretend to imitate life – does not shun imitating art, tragedy just as other comedies as well.[122]

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[1] Beside *Aspis*, we can follow the drift of the initial scenes only in *Samia*, *Dyskolos*, *Heros*, and *Misoumenos*. The prologue speaker in *Perikeiromene* suggests what went on at the beginning of the play.

[2] Lloyd-Jones (1971-74) 256ff.

[3] GS 62. Enthusiastic voices include: Lloyd-Jones (1971) 195: 'one of the most attractive pieces of Menander among those lately recovered'; Vysoký (1970) 92: 'one of Menander's most accomplished plays' (my transl.). Dover (1987) 202 (without yet knowing it was *Aspis*): 'Comoedia Florentia, stylistically the essence of Menander.'

[4] Gutzwiller (2000) 102, 122.

[5] Especially useful discussions dealing with this aspect of Menander's work are: Raina (1987), Scafuro (1997), Stockert (1997), and most comprehensively: Gutzwiller (2000). Seminal was Barchiesi (1971).

[6] I use standard Oxford texts without explicit reference to their editors. It is mainly, but not only, the edition of F. Sandbach (*Menandri Reliquiae Selectae*[2], 1990) for Menander; R. Kauer, W.M. Lindsay, O. Skutsch (*P. Terenti Afri Comoediae*, 1958) for Terence; and W.M. Lindsay (*T. Macci Plauti Comoediae I-II*, 1904-5) for Plautus – where I keep an eye on F. Leo's text (*Plauti Comoediae I-II*, 1895-6, repr. Weidmann 1999). Comic fragments follow R. Kassel, C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci* (Berlin, New York, 1983-). Also consulted were the following texts, referred to by their editor's name only: W.G. Arnott, *Menander* I-III, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass., 1979-2000), C. Austin, *Menandri Aspis et Samia, I. Textus, II. Subsidia interpretationis* (Berlin, 1969-70), J.M. Jacques, *Le Bouclier* (Paris, 1998), S. Jäkel, *Menandri Sententiae, Comparatio Menandri et Philistionis*. Leipzig. (1964), R. Kasser, C. Austin, *Papyrus Bodmer XXVI, Ménandre: Le Bouclier*. (1969). Abbreviations of journals follow the style of *L'Année philologique*, all others are standard and should be self-explanatory, but note GS for A. W. Gomme, F. H. Sandbach, *Menander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1973).

[7] Aristophanes of Byzantium is credited with the saying: *ὦ* Μένανδρε καὶ βίε, πότερος ἆρ' ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο;* (Men. *Test*. 83 K-A). Cf. Manil. V 475f.: *Menander, qui vitae ostendit vitam* (*Test*. 94 K-A); Quint. *Inst. Or*. 10.i.69 *omnem vitae imaginem expressit* (*Test*. 101,3 K-A); Arnott (1968); Gutzwiller (2000) 129; Nesselrath (1990) 149ff.; Zagagi (1994) 94ff.

[8] Neumann (1958).

[9] Thus the Lar in Plaut. *Aul*. compresses in just two lines all necessary information about which of the characters on stage knows what of the rape that happened nine months earlier: *is scit adulescens, quae sit quam compresserit, / illa illum nescit, neque compressam autem pater* (29f.). The audience will derive much fun not only from their superior knowledge but also from knowing who knows what.

[10] For a brief discussion with references, see Gutzwiller (2000) 113ff.

[11] A sign that suggests a wedding is or is not under way appears in Ter. *An*.: the house should be decorated and the doorway busy with people coming in and out. The fact that no one was in front of Chremes' door works as a symbol (in stage terms): *solitudo ante ostium…interea intro ire neminem / video, exire neminem; matronam nullam in aedibus, / nil ornati, nil tumulti* (362, 363f.). All this is taken as *magnum signum* (366) that the wedding is off. Of course, in *Andria* this is all merely reported, not directly visible on stage.

[12] Taplin (1977) 75ff., 304ff..

[13] Cf. also Arnott (1988) 11ff. Arnott (1993) 25f. has a brief discussion of the initial scene in *Aspis*, in comparison with Aristophanes' techniques. He suggests that *Perikeiromene* could begin with an equally puzzling wordless scene as *Aspis*.

[14] A few days have passed since the death: 79-81. Alternatively, Daos may emphasize the sad homecoming. Cf. e.g. *ὦ τῆς πικρᾶς ἐπιδημίας Perik.* 360.

[15] Thrasonides' lament at the beginning of Men. *Mis.* is directed not at appealing to this day but rather this *Night*. This has obvious erotic connotations appropriate to his situation (compare Plaut. *Amph*. 545) but it can also be, at least partly, a reversal of the traditional temporal emphasis on 'this day' when lamenting one's misfortune.

[16] Women are sometimes reported to be doing the same offstage: *Dysk*. 673ff., *Asp*. 227ff.

[17] '…versi di stile quasi perfettamente tragico nella lingua e nel metro', Cassio (1978) 175. Blundell (1980) 71f.; Lampignano (1971-4); Lombard (1971) 122f.

[18] Cassio (1978) 175f. with literary parallels.

[19] Schäfer (1965) draws attention to a similar problem of two seemingly disparate strands in Menander's Dyskolos. However, in *Aspis*, the sombre element is pushed into background, if not completely forgotten with Tyche's arrival, and the characters no longer endeavour to keep the atmosphere gloomy.

[20] The situation has a comic equivalent in Plaut. *Trinummus*. Stasimus hopes that his young master will soon return home to save his property and reward a loyal slave for his good service, all the more praiseworthy when it is so hard to find a faithful friend: *o ere Charmide<s>, quom apsenti hic tua res distrahitur tibi, / utinam te rediisse saluom uideam, ut inimicos tuos / ulciscar<e>, ut mihi, ut erga te fui et sum, referas gratiam! / nimium difficilest reperiri amicum ita ut nomen cluet, / quoi tuam quom rem credideris, sine omni cura dormias* (Plaut. *Trin*. 617-21). If the master's farm is given away, the financial situation in the household will become so desperate that the slave will have to play the part of a soldier slave: *sed id si alienatur, actumst de collo meo, / gestandust peregre clupeus, galea, sarcina*, etc. (595f.)

[21] Nesselrath (1990) 283ff. in his discussion of the evolution and increase in the slave role from Old Comedy onwards, concludes that slaves who are 'humanisierter Helfer und Tröster ihres Herrn' (p. 293) were probably not developed before Antiphanes. It is a convincing hypothesis that they were a very recent development of the slave type having appeared only some 30 years before Menander began his career. At the same time, it must be said that the type is not novel on the tragic stage where pedagogues, nurses, and other slaves loyal to the household, have a long history.

[22] Lombard (1971) 134 has a different explanation of this important concept. 'The notion that *εὔνοια* should be rewarded had strong political connotations at this time and it may be suggested that the Athenians heard an echo of the rhetorical speech in Daos' words.' Cf. his notes 37 and 38. Cassio (1978) 171, after Macleod, also remarks that Daos' wish for a tranquil old age resembles a parent's hopes to find support in his/her children in old age. Cf. Eur. *Med*. 1032ff.

[23] Lombard (1971) 128 takes the words in lines 11f. to mean that Daos 'wished to obtain his freedom had Kleostratos survived the expedition' – although I do not see what makes him think so. Even in his lament directed towards Tyche Daos does not seem to have wished to be released from Kleostratos' services: *ὦ* Τύχη, / *οἴωι μ' ἀφ' οἵου δεσπότου παρεγγυᾶν / μέλλεις. τί σ' ἠδίκηκα τηλικοῦτ' ἐγώ;* (213ff.). Of course, there would be some irony if he did obtain his freedom. E.g. at 200-4 Daos puts himself in opposition with the 'freeborn' and tactfully suggests that they should deal with matters of property, weddings, or blood relationships. In fact, it will be none other than he himself who will be responsible for the design of the intrigue (cf. 348-52) that directly influences marriage and property statuses.

[24] Cf. Lombard (1971) 129 with the perceptive note 23.

[25] Del Corno (1975) and Lombard (1971) are more balanced than Vysoký (1970); while Katsouris (1975) does not discuss *Electra* at all.

[26] The first term used in the play immediately introduced Daos as a slave by opposition to his master: *τρόφιμος*, (commonly a term of address from a slave, cf. GS 292, ad Men. *Epit*. fr.1).

[27] Lines 20f., 27f., 164-6, 189ff, 372, 336f.. Cf. Goldberg (1980) 31. It must be mentioned, however, that even uneducated slaves can freely quote from tragedy (as e.g. Onesimos does in *Epit.* 1123ff.) Sometimes the quotations are almost proverbial and do not indicate any literariness on the speaker's part.

[28] Kleostratos' military achievements, as an individual, are never mentioned (as contrasted with the heroic individuality of other comic soldiers); even his shield is not described (as it would be in a heroic stylisation). The type offered a range of variations and so it is no wonder that Menander varied the role of the soldier in his plays. The soldier in *Misoumenos*, *Perikeiromene*, and *Sikyonios*, plays a leading role; a smaller one is allotted to him in *Dis Exapaton*, just how important his role was in *Eunouchos* and *Kolax* is not clear. Soldier as a comic type: Böhne (1968); Hofmann and Wartenberg (1973); Hunter (1985) 66; Nesselrath (1990) 325ff.; Parke (1933) 234ff.; Wehrli (1936) 101.

[29] Lombard (1971) 134. Ajax has *μεγάλη ψυχή* (Soph. *Aj*. 154), see Solmsen (1984). The opposite characteristic of a soldier appears in Men. *Mis*. (*μικρόψυχος*, 757).

[30] E.g. Plaut. *Trin*. 48f.

[31] See especially Rizzo (1990). For the increase in the role of the pedagogue in the art and theatre of the late fifth and the fourth centuries, see Green (1994) 57-61.

[32] Henderson in his commentary on the play remarks in this respect: 'For the purpose of the following scene, the name 'Myrrhine'…in juxtaposition with 'Kinesias', will have reminded the spectators of the common metaphorical use of 'myrtle'=female genitalia…The significant names underscore the archetypal nature and representative function of the coming encounter.' Henderson (1987) 174 ad 838, cf. also xli.

[33] Dunbar (1998) on verses 644 and 645.

[34] Cf. Olson (1992), Willi (2002) 5f. with references.

[35] *…ἢ καὶ τῶν* Μενάνδρου *πεποιημένων προσώπων* Μοσχίων *μὲν ἡμᾶς παρεσκέυασε παρθένους βιάζεσθαι*, Χαιρέστρατος *δὲ ψαλτρίας ἐρᾶν*, Κνήμων *δὲ δυσκόλους ἐποίησεν εἶναι*, Σμικρίνης *δὲ φιλαργύρους ὁ δεδιὼς μή τι τῶν ἔνδον ὁ καπνὸς οἴχοιτο φέρων*; (Choricius 32, 73 Foerster). Another Smikrines appears in *Sikyonios* though too little is known of his character to pass any judgements.

[36] On Daos: MacCary (1969) 282ff. Brown (1987) offers constructive criticism of MacCary's articles published on this topic (1969, 1971, 1972). MacCary is especially unconvincing in his choice of adjectives to describe Daos as a recurrent type. He is wrong to assume that 'all Daoi seem to be older slaves' (1969, 286): Daos in *Heros* is surely youngish if he fell in love with a girl who was brought up with him. Sherk (1970) calls even the Daos in *Aspis* a 'young man', but I do not see the reason for this. In tragedy, pedagogues are often portrayed as old (e.g. Soph. *El*. 73) but the slave's age in this play is kept vague and never becomes an issue. We may choose to imagine him to be elderly (cf. 12) or just vaguely middle-aged and able to accompany his master on a mercenary career, something not easily expected of an old man (A. *Ag*. 72-74).

[37] Goldberg (1980) 31; Lombard (1971) 130ff.

[38] Katsouris (1975) 113ff. discusses similarities between Smikrines and Polymestor in Eur. *Hecuba*.

[39] Treu (1976) 82 suggests that the reported reversal of fortune need not be merely a literary commonplace but may well allude to a historical expedition of 312 for 'die quasi-realistische Wirkung.'

[40] Dworacki (1973) 38: 'We cannot exclude the fact, however, that ancient audiences did not take seriously the news of the death of the youth in the battlefield, for such a death would not be compatible with comedy convention.'

[41] Cf. also his yes-or-no questioning later, when talking to Chairestratos' 'doctor'.

[42] Other instances where the messenger and the clarity of his message are explicitly mentioned: *Septem* 82, *Suppl*. 930-2 (a herald should make a clear report); Soph. *Ant*. 33f., 405; Eur. *Hel.* 1200; *IA* 1540 with a nice touch: 'if my memory does not fail me' (1541f.): Euripides rightly notices that although the messengers are frequently rather old, their memory is surprisingly impeccable! It is the business of the messengers to know things clearly: when the messenger is in the dark he asks explicitly to be initiated: Eur. *Hel.* 700f. ΑΓ. Μενέλαε, *κἀμοὶ πρόσδοτον τῆς ἡδονῆς*, | *ἢν μανθάνω μὲν καὐτός*, *οὐ σαφῶς δ' ἔχω*.

[43] It seems to me that an oath by Apollo, though common and therefore difficult to define in many cases, may be used when one tries to convince another person that he is telling the truth. The cases where this connotation is clear: *Dysk*. 151f.; *Epit.* 399f.; *Heros* 39; *Samia* 308-10. Note the form [*μὰ τὸν Ἀ*]*πόλλω*, *γὼ μὲν οὔ* in *Mis*. 433, *Perik.*328f., *Phasma* 90. Cf. also *Dysk*. 293, *Phasma* 87. On oaths, cf. also Feneron (1974); de Kat Eliassen (1975). Bain (1984) with further references.

[44] Del Corno (1974) 75-81; Goldberg (1980) 27, 29ff.; Hurst (1990) 95-100, 117f.

[45] Death within the framework of the story may of course occur to bring about a particular situation in a household. Cf. *Epit.* 268: Syros' wife had a baby that died at birth; so *Heros* 30; *Perik.* 145; *Dysk.* 14f. Such information is put in an emotionally unmarked way, e.g. Ter. *Andria* 105f.: 'SI. *Chrysis vicina haec moritur.* SO. *o factum bene! / beasti...'* Deaths that are lamented on comic stage in earnest are those that never actually took place. E.g. Ampelisca's monologue in Plaut. *Rudens* 220ff. is a sincere lament of a death of a fellow slave girl, but unlike this play, the audience are in a position to contrast the lament with Arcturus' earlier information at 67ff.

[46] For the dramatic effect, the goddess must get out of her nature for a moment. Similarly Agnoia in *Perikeiromene* goes against her 'nature' when she brings about the *anagnorisis* of the play.

[47] Contrast Eur. *Hecuba* 141 where *ὅσον οὐκ ἤδη* covers the span of only 77 lines (until 218). It is common to prepare for someone's arrival and see him arrive within a reasonably short span of time. But situations where a character's arrival is foreshadowed and yet he or she does not appear for a significant time are rare. For (especially) Roman Comedy, cf. Harsh (1935) esp. 25ff., 51ff., 73ff. Soph. *Trachiniae* 199 shows a situation where Herakles' arrival is foreshadowed (*ὄψῃ δ' αὐτὸν αὐτίκ' ἐμφανῆ*) though in fact he will not appear for a very long time (he does at 965); not before considerable dramatic action concerning him takes place. Cf. Taplin (1977) 124-26 for Xerxes in Aesch. *Persae.*

[48] Antiphanes fr. 166.5 K-A has a slave's description of a stingy master unsurpassable in *πονηρία*: '*ἄνθρωπος ἀνυπέρβλητος εἰς πονηρίαν*'.

[49] Despite the lack of fine touches, the portrayal of Daos is accepted by some critics as successful. Vysoký (1970) 92: [Daos] 'belongs to the most beautiful characters Menander has ever created, and his presence places this newly discovered comedy amidst [Menander's] most successful ones' (my translation).

[50] Campbell (1983) 222.

[51] Cf. the nearly same wording in *Sikyonios: ἡγεμὼν χρηστὸς σφόδρα / καὶ πλούσιος* (14f.).

[52] Del Corno (1970b) 102 notices that Menander's prologues generally devote little space to aspects of intrigue to be performed in the play.

[53] Tyche has nothing to say about the love affair between Chaireas and the girl and only presents the facts as Chairestratos' pragmatic choice. Brown (1993) 198f.

[54] Everybody in the audience knew the play would end with a marriage or two, but it does not mean the characters on stage should follow this presumption and behave according to it. It is then interesting to see that Tyche does not mention that the play will indeed end with a wedding. In *Dyskolos*, Pan in his unusual role of a matchmaker does not mention there is a marriage happy-ending, even though the theme of romance takes up so much space in his prologue speech. In *Perikeiromene* (despite 128 'this young impetuous blood fell in love with her') the *prologos* again does not mention the marriage that will take place on stage. The *θεὸς προλογίζων* then obviously did not feel the need to mention explicitly the cliché which such an ending clearly was.

[55] Gutzwiller (2000) 124-26 discusses the metaphorical connection between household management and plot epitomized by the word *διοικῆσαι*: 'In the *Aspis* Tyche enlivens this metaphorical association, to assert that her authority over the affairs of the *oikos* equates with her authority over the plot.' (126) On Tyche in Aspis, see especially: Gutzwiller (2000); Haviland (1984); Holzberg (1974) 110ff.; Konet (1975/76); Lloyd-Jones (1971) 175-95; Zagagi (1994) 143ff.; and especially Vogt-Spira (1992) 75ff.

[56] Hunter (1987) 298.

[57] Goldberg (1980) also notes a similar stylistic device used by both Tyche and Smikrines. It consists of a string of emphatic negatives in Tyche's characterization of the old man (117-19) and Smikrines' own denial likewise shaped as another string (149-52).
[58] That is what Sostrata does in Ter. *Hecyra* 274-280 when she remains alone on stage.
[59] Cf. Frost (1988) 24.
[60] A slightly different point about control of the situation in this particular scene has been made by Brown (1995) 78. I am not suggesting by this that knocking at the door was inherently comic and inappropriate in serious dramas, despite Bond (1963) 59 or Taplin (1977) 105. 'Although it came to be more at home in comedy, I suggest that it should be seen not as an intrinsically comic device…but rather as one that can be used in different ways in different contexts, and in tragedy above all as a way of helping to build up the audience's expectations for the scene that follows.' Brown (2000) 2.
[61] Goldberg (1980) 36f.
[62] On *epikleros* law see: MacDowell (1982); Brown (1983); Harrison (1968) 132-38; Karabelias (1970); Lacey (1968) 139-45. Plaut. *Mercator* supports the view that Smikrines acts against what can be seen as the established Poetic Justice of the genre. At the end of Plautus' play, a bill is proposed by the young men that men over sixty years of age should be forbidden to marry as it would threaten the interests of young men.
[63] The point presented here, that slaves should not poke their noses in the affairs of the free-born, is mentioned by Menander elsewhere as well (e.g. *Dysk.* 75f.). We find it also in Aristophanes, in the dialogue between Pluto's slave and Xanthias (*Ran.* 738ff.). They mention prying into their masters' private matters as something clearly not for slaves to do, but by mentioning it in that context, we may safely assume that Aristophanes' slaves mischievously point to a common comic practice.
[64] Sosias in *Perik.* may have been sent home ahead of his master to prepare for his much hoped-for arrival, so too was Pyrrhias in *Sikyonios* (120ff.). In Ar. *Plut*. 627ff. Kario arrives homes before his master with the happy news of the master's recovery. He narrates to the master's wife how Wealth regained his sight so that once the protagonists appear (771) we immediately watch a row of festivities not delayed by any more narratives. Finally, in Plaut. *Amph*. 180ff. Sosia was sent ahead from the harbour to narrate Amphitruo's achievements to his wife.
[65] Gutzwiller (2000) 124.
[66] For his ethnic character, see: Fantuzzi (1984-86); Goldberg (1980) 35, 128f. with note 8; Long (1979); Sherk (1970); Lascu (1969).
[67] In *Samia* 520 Moschion, falsely accused of sleeping with his father's concubine, is called a Thracian. Nikeratos believes him to be sexually incontinent and it seems Thracians were cited as paragons of sexual prowess and manliness.
[68] Handley (1970) 10.
[69] In *Epit.* 610, 631 we see another cook leaving disappointed; in *Mis*. 671 the cook, on what is probably his first appearance, remains exceptionally silent, which is another twist to the convention.
[70] One of Philemon's cooks exhibits great comic ἀλαζονεία, when he boasts immoderately: ἀθανασίαν εὕρηκα (Stratiotes, fr. 82.25 K-A). This probably concerns no more than his culinary *tour de force*. It is impossible to see if the phrase could have been in some way related to the larger context of the plot of that play or not.
[71] Cf. Men. Samia 369ff. Nesselrath (1990) 298. Generally on the type of a comic cook: Dohm (1964); Nesselrath (1990) 297ff. who is right to claim that the type is always connected with a preparation of a feast, often during the resolution of the play. He argues that the cook never exceeds an episodic role.
[72] Sherk (1970) discusses the proverb applicable for this scene: Φρὺξ μηδὲν ἧττων Σπινθάρου. Just as if following the truth of the proverb, both the Phrygian and Spinther are in this scene

seen equal in their silliness: Thracian castigates Daos for not running away with the war booty, the cook tongue-lashes his assistant (named Spinther at 230) for not stealing anything from the house.

[73] Daos is shown as a loyal slave even in *Dyskolos*: πιστὸν οἰκέτην θ' ἕνα / πατρῶιον (26f.).

[74] Nesselrath (1990) 285f. gives cases of the typical Middle Comedy situations of slaves going to or from the market.

[75] In Plaut. *Trin*. 815 we probably have an originally Roman situation when Megaronides says: *ego sycophantam iam conduco de foro*.

[76] Jacques (1978) 41f.

[77] Jacques (1978) 43 compares the ironic parallelism of *Aspis* 257 and 175 with *Samia* 427 and 550.

[78] Marriage that originates from love is acknowledged at *Dyskolos* 788-90 as bringing stability. Brown (1993) 198f. comments on love and marriage in *Aspis*.

[79] Young lovers often spare no costs to gain access to their girlfriends. *namque edepol lucrum amare nullum amatorem addecet* (Plaut. *Poen.* 328). Smikrines' only goal in marrying the girl he does not love is financial gain.

[80] This has been commented upon: Gutzwiller (2000) 122ff., Del Corno (1974) 80, Blänsdorf (1982) 137-141.

[81] Cf. Gaiser (1973) 117ff.

[82] It is not my intention to analyse her role in comedy and real life – that task has been admirably fulfilled by Vogt-Spira (1992). In fact, her concept is of such complexity that in drama it can embrace ambiguous, even opposing descriptions. In this play, for instance, she took care of Kleostratos and saved him for the plot. Elsewhere in a war context, on the contrary, she may be reviled as a nonsentient force: this happens in Apollodoros Carystius' fragment that puts ignorant Tyche in direct connection with war, cf. esp. line 7: ἔστ' ἀγνοοῦσα παντελῶς (*Grammateidiopoios* fr. 5 K-A).

[83] One gets a different glimpse of the relationship between the god(dess) and his or her protégé in Roman comedy. The examples show that such a relationship was exploited for reasons of irony, to show the god at work and the characters whose patron he is - sometimes *going against* the genre's conventions. I am thinking of the Roman *leno*, the very character most repellent and antagonistic to true love as comic poetic justice conceives of it. He stands in way of love but still prays to the god of his profession. He always loses and the god is presented as standing on the side of the young lovers and their relationship. For example, Lycus, the pimp, in Plaut. *Poenulus* 449ff. is angry that Venus does not accept his sacrifices. As if he wanted the goddess of the profession and therefore the guiding spirit of the play to be on his side. However, Venus shows no interest in him. In *Curculio* Cappadox, the pimp, sees that another important god cares nothing for him (216ff.): Asclepius in fact even inflicts an illness on him. In the end, this will prove essential for the protection of the girl for her real lover. If the pimp had been healthy, he would have by now dispatched the girl to live with someone who would buy her (698ff.). Thus Asclepius saves the girl, the plot, and upholds the poetic justice.

[84] *Comparatio Menandri et Philistionis* (*Comp*. II. 12 Jäkel), which no one any longer believes to contain genuine quotations from Menander. Cf. *Testimonium* 74c K-A

[85] For the wording, compare Phoenicides, *incert*. fr. 4.16 K-A τρίτωι συνέζευξ' ἡ τύχη με φιλοσόφωι. The fragment seems to have a metatheatrical reference in the enumeration of stock comic types that a courtesan can encounter by Tyche's working. Tyche, and her whimsical ideas about who meets whom on stage, seem to stand for the playwright himself and his decision making. One may perhaps compare *Dyskolos* 42f.: ἥκο]ντ' ἐπὶ θήραν μετὰ κυνηγέτου τινὸς /]υ, κατὰ τύχην παραβαλόντ' εἰς τὸν τόπον. Again, accidentally Sostratos strayed into

this neighbourhood and the accident (*κατὰ τύχην*) – or good fortune – will be decisive for the later developments of the play. Cf. also *Dysk*. 340

[86] The irony of lamenting in the face, so to speak, of the *spiritus movens* of the play appears also in *Dyskolos*. Sostratos, the young man in love by Pan's working, says he always addresses the god and prays to him whenever he passes his statue (572f.). One also notes the ironic mention of the *spiritus movens* of the play at *Dyskolos* 346f.

[87] Gutzwiller 2000, 127.

[88] We cannot claim that it is Tyche who made Chaireas fall in love but her control of the play in a way makes her responsible for Chaireas' love affair. The question is unimportant, since we have nothing here of the irony that appears in *Dyskolos*. There the youngster attributes his infatuation to Eros, god of love (346f.), instead of giving credit to the god to whom it is due, Pan. The audience have been told that it was in fact Pan's working (39-44). They are thus granted a view that puts the real-life assumptions (here about love and Eros' responsibility for it) into a larger perspective of irony of dramatic knowledge. The audience are like gods who follow the mortals in all their ignorance - the theatrical act and the prologue speaker being suppliers of that larger context of divine knowledge.

[89] He seems a good choice for a speaker to whom we should perhaps ascribe the increased swearing in the fragmentary text of Act V (cf. 527-9).

[90] Brown (1993) 199 notes the interesting point of how different characters bring different aspects of the relationship between Chaireas and Kleostratos' sister into view.

[91] The atmosphere is positively different from the gloomy opening. Kleostratos does, however, get a taste of the initial mood of the play, but on a more positive and much lighter level. The audience know Daos is in the middle of putting on an act to fool everyone uninitiated into the intrigue and this misleads even Kleostratos for a while. He hears from the slave (who does not recognize him yet) that Chairestratos is dead: ΔΑ.*τίνα ζητεῖς; ὁ μ[ὲν γὰρ δεσπότης*

τῆς οἰκίας τέθνηκ[ε
ΚΛ. *τέθνηκεν; οἴμοι δυ[c*
καὶ μὴ 'νόχλει πενθ[οῦσι (500ff.)
502 ? *δυστυχής* [ΔΑ.] *ἄπελθε σύ* Austin

This is a very brief joke upon parallel construction. Kleostratos goes through the same situation of painful ignorance that Daos underwent at the beginning go the play. At the same time, Kleostratos does not know that the one in control of the information is misleading him deliberately to achieve a particular goal. The echo of the leitmotiv if brief but at the same time it is humorously precise.

[92] Gaiser (1973) 119ff. adduces more parallels.

[93] Lombard (1971) 139 'The dénouement of the play, however, makes the intrigue redundant. Daos therefore does not influence the outcome of events at all.'

[94] Compare the comments in Plaut. *Pseudolus* 678f.: *centum doctum hominum consilia sola haec deuincit dea, / Fortuna*. The passage continues with a most interesting commentary on mortals' limited knowledge in the context of Tyche's working.

[95] Gaiser (1973) 18 suggests Euripides' *Helen* as a model for the intrigue; Lombard (1971) 142 shows that the device of a sham death was much more common.

[96] Cf. the sentiment in Menander's monostichs: *οἴμοι, τὸ γὰρ ἄφνω δυστυχεῖν μανίαν ποιεῖ Mon*. 602 Jäkel.

[97] Lloyd-Jones (1971) 183 n.20 against Del Corno (1970a); see also Del Corno (1971); Gaiser (1973) 115 n.10.

[98] Del Corno (1974) 79. An example from tragedy: Soph. *Trachiniae* 15f. See also Katsouris (1976).

[99] Jacques (1978) 49, esp. n.26.

[100] Brown (1987) 194 n. 44 remarks: 'In the world of Greek and Latin Comedy a man is old if he is old enough to have a marriageable son or daughter. If he is old enough to consider marrying, or recently married, he belongs to the younger generation…' By this criterion, Chairestratos is definitely old (even though we know he is younger than Smikrines). Menander seems to like to reverse not only roles but also to play with age. Another person who behaves emotionally, in a way unbefitting his age, is Stratophanes in *Sikyonios* who rather resembles a young man in love.

[101] Jacques (1978) 51 and Halliwell (1983) have both suggested that the *ekkyklema* was used at *Aspis* 303-87. See further Frost (1988) 29-31. This would not only enhance the sense of watching an earnest tragic situation, but would have impact on evaluating the participation of Chairestratos in the intrigue.

[102] *πάνυ / ἐργῶδες* is given to Chairestratos by Arnott (following Lloyd-Jones).

[103] A person whose only thought is to possess everything (and quickly) will be an easy victim. But Menander would not want to lose the irony of fooling a *rationally* thinking person. Cf. also Diphilos *incert.* fr. 99 K-A: the mind of an avarice is blind to everything else: *ἆρ' ἐστὶν ἀνοητότατον αἰσχροκερδία· | πρὸς τῶι λαβεῖν γὰρ ὧν ὁ νοῦς ταλλ' οὐχ ὁρᾶι.*

[104] Bain (1977) 127 is more balanced than me: 'I find it impossible to decide whether Daos says this under his breath with a patient shaking of his head or whether he says the words aloud to Chairestratos' face. Either way would be effective. Daos is a well-behaved slave with a sense of humour. Perhaps if he is speaking aloud he has for the moment lost patience with the slowness of the free man. It would be out of character for him to speak such a line gloatingly like a Plautine slave or some of the cheekier slaves in Menander.' (Cf. also his note 3.)

[105] Gutzwiller (2000) 120, independently notes: 'in the *Aspis* the comic intrigue, the pseudo-tragedy devised by Daos, is mirrored externally by the comic plot set in force by Tyche.' See also her discussion of a similar pattern in Men. *Epitrepontes*, p. 121ff.

[106] Gaiser (1973) 118; Raina (1987) 26-29; Scafuro (1997) 348; Vogt-Spira (1992) 84f.

[107] Gutzwiller (2000) 122: 'the language of the play encourages the audience to read the creator of the intrigue, the slave Daos, as an internal version of the comic playwright'. Cf. also p. 128.

[108] Cf. Jacques (1998): 'le médecin du Bouclier n'a rien d'une création originale, c'est le point d'aboutissement d'une longue tradition.' We know that Antiphanes, Aristophon, Theophilos, and Philemon all wrote plays called '*Iatros*'. See also Arnott (1996) 431f.; Gigante (1969); Gil and Alfageme (1972); Goldberg (1980) 32; Alfageme (1995).

[109] We can see this graphically in Plaut. *Poenulus*. Agorastocles, the young master in love, even says: *quando Amor iubet /me oboedientem esse seruo liberum*. (447f.) He actually shows this in his movements, as for example when the slave Milphio suggests Agorastocles should go in the house and instruct Collybiscus in his role, he says: *quamquam Cupido in corde uorsatur, tamen / tibi auscultabo* (196f.). When Milphio wants him out of the house, he will again obey (205-8).

[110] The formula *ἀγαθῆι τύχηι* is not only a humorously incongruous wish before the intrigue. It also hints at Tyche's help, acknowledged in a similar context in Sophocles' tragedy. Orestes in Soph. *Electra* plans his own sham death and in the course of his speech mentions the cliché about the working of Tyche in connection with death when he says: *τέθνηκ' Ὀρέστης ἐξ ἀναγκαίας τύχης* (48).

[111] Cf. *Dysk* 889f.: *ὦ Πόσειδον, / οἷαν ἔχειν οἶμαι διατριβήν*, directly before the revenge that Getas plans on Knemon. Cf. also Plaut. *Trin*. 819.

[112] Bain (1977) 175f. argues that we should not be applying realistic criteria to the staging of Daos' entrance here. Dedoussi (1986) tries to explain away the absence in the text of any introductory signs of the fact that the intrigue is about to follow, especially the absence of the comment on the noise of the door. She suggests this staging: 'Smikrines could not hear the sound of the door because it was supposed to be opened only a little and cautiously; then

Daos' head appeared, he looked around, saw Smikrines and disappeared momentarily. This silent spying could make things clear to the audience before Daos' sudden appearance, but now there was no time for Smikrines to comment upon the sound of the door.' Surely the playwright does not have to have foolproof motivation for every entrance – especially if the coincidence happens to amuse the spectators or draw attention to the clever weaving of accidents into a well-constructed plot.

[113] One may compare Menander's *Misogynes* 239 K-A, *Kolax* 46, *Epit.* 525, 631, *Aspis* 399, 529, *Mis*. 686, *Samia* 323, *Sik.* 117, 273, *Fab. Inc*. 25. In *Epit.* 631 Chairestratos (?) comes on stage unaware that Smikrines may overhear him. He very probably laments the situation in the house - where Habrotonon may have shown some supercilious behaviour – and the invocation of Helios could be then very similar to that in *Aspis* (with the only difference that here Daos *intentionally* wants Smikrines to overhear what he has to say.)

[114] Vysoký (1970) 91.

[115] There were impudent Daos's who, though loyal to their masters, were telling lies and pulling wool over their masters: *Perik.* 267ff.: Δᾶε, πολλάκις μὲν ἤδη πρός μ' ἀπήγγελκας λόγους / οὐκ ἀληθεῖς, ἀλλ' ἀλαζὼν καὶ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸς εἶ. | εἰ δὲ καὶ νυνὶ πλανᾶις με... Smikrines could hint at, and play with, such a conventional characterization of a Daos.

[116] Regardless of this problem, the situation is similar to what happens in Plaut. *Truculentus*. The leading *hetaira*, all dressed up, wishes that her soldier arrived now that she is ready for him: *nunc ecastor adveniat miles velim* (Leo's text, 481). And, indeed, so he does – at exactly that moment! Of course, he was expected, but his arrival just then at the right moment with the *hetaira* ready for him, symbolically makes the courtesan appear as a sort of director of the stage movements of a man subordinated to her. The same impression could underlie the opportune arrival of Chaireas with the false doctor in *Aspis*.

[117] The list of illnesses that appears in Adespota fr. 910 K-A (πλευρίτιδες, περιπλευμονίαι, φρενίτιδες, | στραγγουρίαι, δυσεντερίαι, ληθαργίαι, | ἐπιληψίαι, σηπεδόνες, ἄλλα μυρία) *may* seem to support the hypothesis that such catalogues were used for a blatantly comic effect within a comic intrigue.

[118] I read οὐκ ἔστ]ιν ἐλπὶς οὐδεμία σωτηρίας (447) with Austin and Arnott as a question from Smikrines.

[119] It may be of some help to compare Onesimos' poking fun at Smikrines in *Epitrepontes*, where he can laugh at Smikrines' expense because the old man does not know the facts: παχύδερμος ἦσθα καὶ σύ, νοῦν ἔχειν δοκῶν (1114). A similar resolution appears in Soph. *Electra,* mentioned here because the play bears many resemblances to *Aspis*. At 1479f. Aigisthos gains ultimate knowledge: οἴμοι, ξυνῆκα τοὔπος· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπως ὅδ' οὐκ Ὀρέστης ἔσθ' ὁ προσφωνῶν ἐμέ. It is conceivable that in *Aspis* Smikrines could in similar words comment on seeing the two 'dead' men come to life.

[120] Gutzwiller (2000) 132 note 76, suggests a 'morally correct' ending; see also Scafuro (1997) 340-45.

[121] Del Corno (1974) 76: 'Vielfältigkeit der Kunst Menanders.'

[122] Although I would not go as far as Gutzwiller (2000) 105 who claims that 'Metatheatrical elements in Menander stem from the sustained view of his characters that life is like a tragedy.' Or that 'Tragedy is in fact a mask worn by Menander's comedy, and the audience has a metadramatic experience whenever it focuses on the fact of masking - that is, the duality of the performance and the performed.'

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