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MENANDER, *PHILADELPHOI*,  
AND A NOTE ON THE MATERIAL EVIDENCE  
FOR THE RECEPTION OF THIS AND SOME  
OTHER PLAYS UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE\*



ABSTRACT: *Philadelphoi* (or *Adelphoi A*) had a brief glimpse of fame recently when a mosaic showing its most famous scene was unearthed near Antioch (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Labelling gives us the name of the play and tells us that the scene comes from Act I. It thus falls into the series of Menander's plays that were devised with an opening scene that captured the audience and was to last in the memory.<sup>2</sup> The image shows what must have been a tour-de-force by the actor playing the father-figure, striding about and talking vigorously to his two daughters who were placed to either side. The script must surely have been written with a particular actor in mind.

AT THE TIME OF THE PRIMARY publication in 2012, this mosaic seemed to be the only known representation of the play, even prompting the authors to speculate that the image could have been invented for the particular occasion of the mosaic's installation, at some point in the second or, perhaps more likely, third century AD. A newly invented depiction was always

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\* In what follows, *MNC*<sup>3</sup> = *Monuments Illustrating New Comedy* (3rd ed. by J.R. Green and Axel Seeberg, *BICS* Suppl. 50, 1995); *MNC-D* = a new searchable, digital, on-line version, soon to be launched through the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London. It contains many additions as well as everything that was listed in *MNC*<sup>3</sup> together with a wide range of illustrations. It does not, however, include the discussions that were printed in volume 1 of *MNC*<sup>3</sup>. I should like to record my thanks to *Logeion's* anonymous reader for some astute comments.

1. Çelik 2009, esp. 48 fig. 2, and then a more definitive publication by Gutzwiller and Çelik 2012, esp. 591 figs. 17-20. Note the overview of the set at their p. 574 fig. 1 which shows up the irregularities of size and treatment. Also the important discussion by Nervegna 2013, 136ff. Gutzwiller is surely right to point out that the mosaic removes any doubt that Menander's *Philadelphoi* was identical with his first *Adelphoi*, the plot of which is known from Plautus' *Stichus*.
2. E.g. Arnott 1993 (principally on Aristophanes and Menander) and Arnott 1992 (principally on Plautus).

inherently unlikely, given that almost all our other examples of key scenes from Menander's plays can be demonstrated to have a history that goes back to the early third century BC, even if that history is to be traced through a variety of media and through a range of modifications reflecting developments in comic costume and shifts in artistic manner. There is now common agreement that there must have been a series of *pinakes*, probably dedicated and housed somewhere in the Sanctuary of Dionysos in Athens, that depicted key scenes of Menander's plays, what very soon came to be taken as the eponymous scenes. Even in this late version, the compositional balance between the two young women, with the father at the pivotal point between, would be most at home in such a context. In terms of staging and motif, we may also note in passing that the idea of a senior figure in discussion with two younger ones is to be found also in *Synaristosai*, even if the physical arrangement is different: the two young women share a couch while the older woman has a distinct, separate seat that the mosaicists of later antiquity turn into a more substantial, throne-like basketry chair typical of the period.

Some of these depictions evidently became famous in their own right as classic paintings: one thinks particularly of the scenes from *Theophrouroumene* and *Synaristosai* and the way they were used in private houses in towns such as Pompeii or Stabiae, and later in places from Chania to Zeugma, Antioch and Lesbos, not to mention Oescus. In these cases we cannot know how familiar the owners may have been with the plays referred to, but what is clear from the costume of the characters depicted is that the paintings and mosaics most often do not reflect contemporary stage performance. Mosaics are of course better preserved than paintings, but we should remember that the archetypes were also copied in three dimensions, as with the well-known Myrina terracottas of the Middle and Later Hellenistic periods. Another important category of material in the first and second centuries AD is small bronze figurines. There is a good number of them, as a glance at *MNC*<sup>3</sup> will show, and there are even more that will appear in the forthcoming online version, something in excess of a hundred in total. They have had little further investigation from a theatrical viewpoint and there is a great deal more work to be done.<sup>3</sup> Their identification should prove instructive in the context of what is sometimes called the Second Sophistic but it is important to note from the start that they are not confined to that period but were popular already under the Julio-Claudians, and they in some cases demonstrably picked up from Late Hellenistic examples.

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3. For a significant first step, see Seeberg 1988.



Fig. 2. Lyons, Musée des Beaux Arts,  
A 2787. Ht 7.4cm.



Fig. 3. Once Munich, market (1929).  
Overall width 16cm.

For *Philadelphoi* five of these small bronzes are immediately relevant (Figs. 2-6). They reproduce the figure of the father in the mosaic fairly closely except that they each have a noticeably shorter himation. This is a reflection of their Hellenistic prototypes and was a convention common to many of the bronze figurines in general. It presumably evoked their 'classical' origins.<sup>4</sup> The earliest is the one in Lyons (Fig. 2) and it in fact has the shortest himation, terminating on the right knee and left thigh.<sup>5</sup> It also has the finer modelling and the earliest mask-form of the series. It quite likely belongs in the first half of the first century AD.<sup>6</sup> The figurine stands on its original base though the legs have at some point been broken and mended. Next in time

4. On the period of Menander being seen as classical in Augustan with regard to both choregic inscriptions and sculpted masks, see my comment in Green 2008, 103-4. This seems to be a special theatre category within the complexity of approaches, as demonstrated for example by La Rocca 2004.
5. Lyons, Musée des Beaux Arts, A 2787; Reinach, *RS* ii.558.3; Boucher 1973, 118f., no. 183 (with earlier refs); Landes 1989, 126 and 130 no. 4; *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 4XB 6a. The base is ancient. Ht 7.4cm.
6. For an outline of the development and chronology of individual mask-types, see the chapter 'Costumes and Masks' in *MNC*<sup>3</sup>. For more detail, see the listings in the Catalogue in volume ii.



Fig. 4. Once Munich, market (2015). Ht 7.2cm.



Fig. 5. Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum 96.AB.188. Ht 7cm.



Fig. 6. Dresden, Skulpturen-sammlung AB 709. Ht 7cm.

should come a lamp that was long ago on the Munich market and is now apparently lost to sight (Fig. 3)<sup>7</sup>; it should date to the last years of the first or more probably the earlier years of the second century AD. The figurine is placed on the lamp's circular lid, and while its handling is not of the highest quality, the type is clearly the same and it is interesting among other reasons for the hint of the actor's mouth within the frame of the beard. Another piece was more recently on the Munich market (Fig. 4).<sup>8</sup> The form of the beard suggests a Flavian date. The lower right leg and foot are missing but the legs look heavier, as if the leggings were now looser. A fourth is nowadays in the Getty Museum (Fig. 5).<sup>9</sup> To judge by the form of the beard it is fully Hadrianic if not somewhat later: in appearance it is closely comparable to the monumental marble masks from Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli<sup>10</sup>; we cannot know how much later a manufacturer of such a figurine may have been taking up the style. The length of the himation and the treatment of the legs are much the same as on Fig. 4, suggesting perhaps that it is not very much later. Quite like

7. Helbing 1929, no. 50, pl. 8; Reinach, *RS* vi.182.2; *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 4XB 6b. Overall width 16cm.

8. Gorny & Mosch, *Auktion 235*, 16 December 2015, no. 42. Ht 7.2cm. Formerly in an English private collection.

9. 96.AB.188. Christie, *Sale Cat.*, 10 December 1985, no. 181; *Passion For Antiquities* (1994) 287-88, no. 148. Ht 7cm. Formerly in the Fleischman collection.

10. See especially the work of Gasparri 1996 (with a full list of the pieces); *id.* 1998a. See also his publication of the masks in Gasparri 1998b. And then Gasparri 2005.



Fig. 1. Mosaic in Daphne with scene from *Philadelphoi*.

the Getty piece is another, in Dresden (Fig. 6), from which the right hand is missing.<sup>11</sup> The form of the mask is much the same, although the roll of hair at the front is less full, more like those of the figurines in Lyons and the earlier piece from the Munich market (Figs 2 and 3).

One key feature that these bronze figurines share is the positioning of the himation around the body, the way it hangs low against the right hip, exposing a great deal of the chest and the whole of the right arm. The left hand is by the waist and in some cases holding onto the hem of the himation. The right arm is somewhat extended while still preserving something of a bend at the elbow. In four of the five examples, two fingers are extended in that well-known speaking gesture. In these respects they are distinct among comic bronze figurines and it is evident that they shared a common archetype. Another unusual feature that they share is the positioning of the feet, somewhat apart and the left leg forward. As a determinant of the action presented by the actor, they are an important factor in establishing his identity.

If we now go back to comparing the figurines with the central figure of the mosaic (Fig. 1), we can see that they share many of the key elements but with some interesting and readily explicable variants. We should also be aware that we cannot expect photographically exact copies, given the range

11. Dresden, Skulpturensammlung AB 709. Ht 7 cm.

of materials and individuals involved in the copying process. As the authors of the primary publication observed, the figure in the mosaic is not particularly well done, whether overall or in detail; nor are the relative sizes of the three figures well judged. In comparing the mosaic and the bronzes we should also bear in mind that the old man in the mosaic is constructed in two dimensions while the figurines are in three. Thus the thrust of the right arm is more pronounced in the figurines; on the other hand they do not have the staff, probably for practical reasons, so that the left hand hangs onto the himation at waist level: this occurs consistently and should go well back in the iconographic tradition. Again the right turn of the head is less obvious, though, interestingly, it is more marked in the Lyons (Fig. 2) and the one recently in Munich (Fig. 4), that is, the earlier ones. It may be that the context of his walking up and down between the two women was no longer uppermost in the maker's mind: the maker was thinking of an inherited image, not the performance on stage. The hourglass motifs on the old man's skirts in the mosaic are a frequent identifier in mosaics of the middle and later Empire and presumably reflect what was seen on stage at this period; one could not expect to see them on bronze.<sup>12</sup> The most marked difference is that the position of the feet has been reversed in the mosaic. This is not the only example of partial mirror-imaging in the iconographic tradition — one sees it for example in the *Synaristosai* series. Sometimes it seems to be explicable by a shift in emphasis, and that may have been so here in that he could be read as being in particular argument with the daughter on the left of the scene. At other times one thinks of other possible reasons, such as Handley's idea of organising the picture in the order of speakers, from left to right<sup>13</sup>, although that does not seem to be applicable here, or else through the vagaries of the copying process and possibly defective copy-books (or sheets of papyrus that could so readily tear or become cracked).<sup>14</sup>

To the extent that one can rely on the mosaic, there is no obvious difference between the daughters' masks, itself an interesting point: the difference is achieved in their clothing, in this case alternating blue and red for chiton and himation. One would dearly love to know how much of this was true in the archetype. The handling of paired characters has often been the subject of debate. Elements that are probably particular to the mosaic include the

12. Examples at Mytilene are to be seen in the panels of *Kybernetai*, *Epitrepontes*, *Encheiridion* and *Samia*. It also appears by extension on the himation of the Muse Thalia who carries an Old Man's mask on *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 6DP 4 (the wall-painting in Ephesos).

13. Handley 1997.

14. As I argued in the case of the Naples relief: Green 1985.

daughters' chairs, now of the Late Antique basketry kind<sup>15</sup>; as noted above, one sees their counterparts for example in the version of *Synaristosai* in Zeugma on the right of the scene for the old woman<sup>16</sup>; or the version of the same scene in Mytilene; or indeed for the version in Daphne laid alongside our *Philadelphoi*. They were introduced in the later part of the first century AD and steadily became more popular. They were mostly used by women but appear from time to time with male intellectual authority-figures such as teachers, writers or philosophers. They must have been quite comfortable; Pliny (*NH* 16.68.174) has them made of willow. Most of our representations have them in the western empire, perhaps where materials for their manufacture were more readily available, and it raises the question of whether these eastern mosaics include them simply because they are copies of western images.

The wool in the women's hands has presumably become simplified too. One might have expected them to be spinning, as a further and in fact standard indicator of their identity and status, at least in the Greek world.<sup>17</sup> It would be interesting to know if they did it on stage in Menander's original production, the actors being male, but they might simply have held spindles while paying attention to the figure of the father.

A not dissimilar issue concerns the Old Man's staff. It too is an identifier of status in theatre images and elsewhere, as denoting a free citizen male of a certain maturity. Here again we are dealing with a stage convention of both Middle and New Comedy and one that reflected the habits of Athenian gentlemen as they went about town.<sup>18</sup> If one thinks about the context of the scene as we understand it, he had just dropped in, from next door as it were, to have a word with his daughters. He had no real need for his staff, and the makers of the bronze figurines clearly did not feel any pressing need for it. In this case, though, it is probable that Menander had him carry one and that it

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15. On such chairs, see Daszewski 1966. More recently Ehrl 1990 and a brief note in Croom 2007, 116-119.

16. As distinct from the cushioned stool employed in Dioskourides' version and presumably the original.

17. On spinning and female identity, see for example Sutton 2004; Stears 2001; Zarkadas 2009; Bender Jørgensen 2012; Larsson Lovén 2013.

18. The best treatment is that by Brulé 2006, but one should also consult Couvret 1994-95. For representations in red-figure pottery, see for example Hollein 1988, and Wehgartner 1989, who makes some useful introductory remarks. The staff was so fundamental to a man's status and identity that he could be shown as dropping it at some shock (such as may be presented by a woman) in a way parallel to that in which Menelaos drops his sword at the sight of Helen on a number of Attic vases: most recently Roscino 2013-2014.

was present in the original painting. One doubts very much if the same habits existed at the time and place of the mosaic.

In terms of overall impact as it may be read in this scene, the way the Father allowed his himation to hang was critical. Athenian males of the classical period, or at least those of the respectable classes, took great care of their appearance when out of doors. An Athenian citizen was supposed ideally to have *sophrosyne*, that is, to have and show moderation and restraint in his attitude and in his behaviour.<sup>19</sup> His behaviour was of course reflected in his appearance, for example in the style of his clothes and the way he wore them. An instance is the way that we see in contemporary free-standing and relief sculpture as well as in vase-painting that the ideal mature male kept his left hand and arm within his himation, and at times the right hand too, this last further emphasising the point. He could not and did not wave his arms around. (He could not be thought to be the kind of person who undertook manual work either.<sup>20</sup>)

The himation, which was the regular outdoor wear for mature 'free' males in the fifth century, was heavy and enveloping, and certainly did not encourage free or violent movement.<sup>21</sup> Gloves had not yet been introduced, but as just noted, except in special cases, some care was taken to conceal at least one of the hands (usually the left). Of representations in contemporary vase-painting, the ubiquitous draped youths found on the reverse of red-figure calyx- and bell-kraters are a case in point.<sup>22</sup> Another example is to be found on the Choregos Vase (Fig. 7). The two choregoi are on the one hand costumed as normal comic actors of that period with short dress which exposes the phallos, but on the other they wear the equivalent of long himatia, with the left hand bound up invisibly within. They are wealthy, upper-crust gentlemen, as one would expect of choregoi who have been called upon to perform a liturgy. It is a good case of the conventional nature of stage costume: the audience

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19. On fitting behaviour generally, one should still bear in mind the classic article by Pohlenz 1933/1965. Note *inter alia* Eitrem 1983. On physical aspects of public behaviour, see the important observations of Bremmer 1991.

20. See Pipili 2000, but she concentrates on the evidence of red-figure of the earlier part of the fifth century and has no discussion of figures from the theatre. Among other recent studies of depictions of workmen, of which there is quite a number, see Pugliara 2002; Chatzidimitriou 2005 and 2014; Haug 2011.

21. Geddes 1987 remains important.

22. For example Isler-Kerényi 1993; Franceschini 2014, with bibl. at 299 n.38. A useful area for those investigating the proprieties of deportment is grave reliefs, especially because they are so bound by convention. For steps in this direction, see Bergemann 1994 and 1995.



Fig. 7. Naples 248778; once Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum 96.AE.29. Ht 37cm.

is accustomed to read the relevant aspects. The result was that here in the figurines (and in the theatre) this arrangement of the himation was distinctive enough to be noticed and to identify the character of the figure in question.

In terms of the original painting, what the staff helps to demonstrate is that he was conceived as a very proper gentleman, perhaps a rather conservative man if he would take his staff when talking to his daughters, so that the disarray of his clothing was an indicator of his disturbed state. The daughters, in their determination to wait for the return of their husbands rather than take his advice to find new partners to ensure their future security, were perhaps being wooden (in his view) and certainly not prepared to take their father's 'good advice'. To judge by the surviving fragments of the script, he worked himself into something of a state, what we might call tearing his hair, letting his clothing fall into disarray.<sup>23</sup>

23. See for example Fr. 396 ("It isn't easy to deal with someone's stupidity in just a few minutes") or Fr. 397 with its expletive and his unbelieving reaction. MacCary 1971 gave a helpful characterisation of Menander's Old Men and suggested that he may well have been called Smikrines [306, 313]. He would typically have been a difficult individual, but one might guess not irredemiably so. Smikrines is a name not infrequently used for a man worried about money.

One remarkable feature of the depiction on the lamp (Fig. 3) is that the gesture with the right hand is different. It is not the two-finger speaking gesture that we see with the others, a gesture that carried a degree of authority (which is how it came to be carried over to the christian blessing).<sup>24</sup> The latter should indicate that the father was giving good advice, even instruction to his daughters as to how he believed they should behave. In this case, by contrast, the palm of the hand is open and uppermost: this is the gesture of asking or pleading.<sup>25</sup> It is reinforced here by the angling of the shoulders and the head — important when one is wearing a mask. This variant suggests that someone somewhere in the iconographic tradition was conscious that the father did not have the argument all his own way.

There are ways in which the man in Fig. 3 reminds one of a figure shown in one of the scenes in the painted frieze from the so-called House of the Comedians in Delos.<sup>26</sup> It is from the northern end of the west wall and is a three-figure composition in which the old man approaches from the right to address a woman while a young man stands back, worried. Despite superficial similarities, the contrast between this man and ours is remarkable. His gesture is made the more forceful by the way he places his weight on his right leg, directly in line with his arm and hand. His manner is quite different.

Bronze figurines of the Imperial period have received little attention as evidence for the reception of New Comedy. Indeed apart from the admittedly hazy listings in *MNC*<sup>3</sup>, there has been only Axel Seeberg's brief article, written almost 30 years ago but still worth careful attention as making clear the key problems.<sup>27</sup> These include dating — still a major problem and one of some importance — centres of manufacture, and among a number of others, market and function. It may now be possible to go a little further, at least on the last. Our idea that as a general rule manufacturers of comic figurines at this period were not aiming primarily at new inventions or observations inspired directly from the stage seems to be holding good. They were, rather, copying known, accepted figurine-types that had a respectable history. They

24. See in the first instance Richter 2003. The missing hand of Fig. 6 (Dresden) must have been the same, given the angle of the arm.

25. See my remarks at Green 2001, 58 with n.51 and its reference to Demosthenes, and then the effect of such a gesture on one's reading of the scene representing *Samia*: Green 2014. I maintain my position here despite the comments of Casanova in his adjoining article: the visual evidence is direct and not dependent on one's guess as to how much of the papyrus remains.

26. *Delos* xxvii, pl. 22, 8, details pl. 23, 5-8 (Bruneau); Bruno 1985, pll. 3, 5b; *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 3DP 2.4.

27. Above n.4.

might modify them a little, bring aspects of the costume up to date (especially the masks) and apply contemporary conventions of the depiction of costume such as stippling of the body tunic (a convention also applied in depictions of Thalia on Muse sarcophagi). This last is later if somewhat inconsistently changed to a reticulate or net treatment that, interestingly enough, is also applied to elephants<sup>28</sup>: the body-tunic hangs loosely, especially around the legs in a similar kind of way. Even on ours, the coverings of the legs of the three 'homeless' figurines are already looking baggy (Figs. 4, 5, 6). This habit of reproducing known types must have tied in with a belief that they belonged to a 'classical' tradition, as did features such as the short himation.

These figurines were, so far as one can tell, copies of extracts from scenes with multiple figures. Thus, just as this series picks out the father from the key scene of *Philadelphoi*, so others similarly began life as extracts: the dancing young man with cymbals from the key scene of *Theophoroumene* is one case.<sup>29</sup> One of the types of slave seated on an altar, leaning over onto his right hand with his left on his lap, is another. The scene as a whole is best known from a series of terracotta plaques, probably from Rome. It has been argued to derive from *Perinthia*.<sup>30</sup> The key figure, the slave sitting on altar supporting himself with one hand and holding a ring in the other, is known in many versions in a range of media. The drunken young man supported by his slave is yet another; the full scene is found in the Naples relief and the splendid cameo in Geneva but we have the pair extracted in versions running through to Late Antiquity.<sup>31</sup> Yet another example, already noted by Seeberg, is the slave standing quietly, his hands clasped in front of his belly.<sup>32</sup> We have many others that evidently belong to series but for which, in the fragmentary state of our evidence, we cannot identify the original scene, let alone the name of the play.

This choosing of the key figure from a more complex scene was not new to the Imperial period. We see it already in Middle Hellenistic, with terracotta figurines, and of course in gems which only exceptionally included

28. Compare for example the ivory in the British Museum: Buckton 1994, 58.

29. The Myrina terracotta *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 3DT 17 and the little bronze figurine recently on the Paris market *MNC-D* 5XB 31a, Pierre Bergé & Associés, *Sale Cat.*, 28-29 May 2008, no. 806 (colour ill.). For representations of the play as a whole: *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 3DM 2a (Pompeii), 4NM 3a (Pompeii), 5NP 1 (Stabiae), 6DM 2.5 (Mytilene), 6HM 6.4 (Antioch). See Nervegna 2010.

30. See the brief notes in *MNC*<sup>3</sup> i, 91 under XZ 21-22. The plaques are listed in *MNC*<sup>3</sup> under 4RT 1a-d.

31. See my remarks in Green 1985.

32. See n.4.



Fig. 8. Terracotta lamp-lid, Delos.

The figure on the lamp (Fig. 3) falls into a tradition that began on the later side of Middle Hellenistic and we see the idea both in bronze versions and occasionally in terracotta, doubtless imitating the bronze. One of the earliest known is a black-glazed terracotta seated slave holding a lyre that was found in Delos, a piece that could be counted as belonging to the Magenta Group that itself contains many plastic vases in the form of figures from Comedy (Fig. 8).<sup>35</sup> It is probably from a lamp and certainly a lid. It is datable to the Middle Hellenistic period. Another clay example is a figure placed directly on an Egyptian lamp; it has a slave seated, right hand to chin, legs crossed at

more than a single figure (or more frequently a mask).<sup>33</sup> The Myrina figurines are very much a case in point. One has the impression that they began as sets, as truly three-dimensional versions of paintings that were conceived as representing three dimensions. On the other hand they seem to have concentrated fairly quickly on the key figures from these scenes. Thus for example the well-known pornoboskos of the Louvre, Athens and British Museum figurines or the group of the drunken youth leaning on his slave extracted from the scene known from the Naples relief and the Geneva cameo.<sup>34</sup> The latter appear as late as the early sixth century, demonstrating how long the visual tradition of such figures could continue and be widely understood — some 800 years.

Of our collection of five, one (Fig. 2) is a stand-alone piece on an individual base that we may reasonably assume had a good chance of being recognised for what it was.

33. Gems are also an area deserving of more study from this perspective.

34. Pornoboskos: *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 3DT 2a-b, 3DT 3a-e and 3DT 4; drunken young man, perhaps from *Methe*, *AJA* 89, 1985, 465-472. Late versions include *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 6DI 1, 6RC 1, 6XI 1. Note also Csapo 2010, 159-161.

35. *MNC-D* 2DV 15, *Μούσων Δώρα* 2004, 163 no. 57 (colour ill.); Hadzidakis 2004, 385 no. 070.B, pl. 168d. See also the relevant material in Sguaitamatti, Leibundgut Wieland, Leone and Lezzi-Hafter 2015.



Fig. 9. Berlin, Misc. 10051, from Priene.

the ankle, one of the commonest types among all comic figurines.<sup>36</sup> The seated slaves are, however, more common in bronze and include at least two others with the same figure-type and another that could be described as loosely of the same series.<sup>37</sup> There were obviously practical advantages in using compact figures in such a position, and this type of seated slave seems almost to have become standard. At the same time one might reckon that a standing figure with outstretched arm such as ours was for this very reason regarded as being more specially recalled. Another figurine on the lid of an elaborate lamp has a standing slave with arms and legs crossed, close to the body.<sup>38</sup> In addition to these there is a good number of bronze lamps with lids in the form of masks. One of the finest is a lamp from Priene in Berlin (Fig. 9).<sup>39</sup>

The association of comic figurines with lamps surely lies in their attraction at the banquet.<sup>40</sup> Well known nowadays are the cases of masks hanging in dining rooms, as in Priene, in their way echoing the practice known from the Sanctuary of Dionysos in Athens, or, in the Roman period, the inclusion

36. *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 4EL 1.

37. *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 4XB 9c. *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 4XB 9g. And then *MNC-D* 4XB 9h, Florence 2325, Milani 1912, pl. CXL, 1; *El Teatro Romano* 2004 168 right; Arbeid and Iozzo 2015, 110 no. 70 (colour ill.) (Bueno, with further refs).

38. *MNC-D* 5XB 37a, Christie's (New York), *Sale Cat.*, 5 June 1998, no. 161 (colour ill.). Possibly an old man rather than a slave, and certainly after a Hellenistic model. In 2002 on the Jerusalem market, Venus Galleries, with a claim that it was from Jerusalem.

39. *MNC-D* 4XB, Berlin Misc. 10051, e.g. Raeder 1983, 58 no. 281, fig. 8b. Note also *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 4XB 30a-b and *MNC-D* 4XB 47a, Baltimore HT 608, Williams 1984, 80 no. 55 (ill.).

40. For some thoughts on patterns of choice in the subject-matter of relief designs on clay lamps, see recently Koutoussaki 2015, 179-184.

of paintings and mosaics depicting scenes from Menander's comedies.<sup>41</sup> The figurines on lamps at evening festivities were surely another aspect of such patterns of choice. Not only would they echo the recital or performance of passages from comedy that we know were popular, but the appearance of the figurine immediately behind the flickering light of the lamp's flame in what was otherwise a relatively dark setting would have carried some sense of movement as the angle of the light shifted slightly as air moved through the room. The masks on lids would have gained some appearance of life in a similar way. A further point is that their size and detail encourage one to suppose that such a lamp was provided for each guest. The sophistication of the setting and of the paraphernalia for the banquet has been well explored in recent scholarship.<sup>42</sup> It is not difficult to suppose that such lamps were provided for individual guests and that they were found evocative.

The special relationship with lamps as sources of light in an otherwise dark environment has been well explored recently by Kanellou.<sup>43</sup> She takes the example of lamps in the erotic epigram as a means describing a lover's emotions and through which the lamp can take on an almost personal quality. Communication between person and lamp is a given in a way which might seem surprising to us but was evidently seen by epigrammatists (and their readers) as quite likely in the physical conditions of the ancient world. Related is the role of lamps in magical practice. This is a subject well examined recently by Athanassia Zografou who notes the use of lamps for oracular dreams or visions, pointing out that the lamp is personified in these requests and that "their flame seemed to animate the figurines placed on them".<sup>44</sup> "The lamp has therefore become an emblem of the power to twist the appearance of things, to play with the luminous apparitions of stars and gods." More generally one remembers the importance of lamps in the cult of Isis or for that matter in the Eleusinian Mysteries.<sup>45</sup> We do not need to push our

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41. For two striking discussions, see Dunbabin 2008; Nervegna 2013, esp. 120-200.

42. One thinks especially of the work of K.M.D. Dunbabin in such pieces as Dunbabin 1995 and Dunbabin 2003. Also important are the essays in Slater 1991: particularly relevant are C.P. Jones, "Dinner Theater", at 185-198 (esp. 192-193), and J. Rossiter, "Convivium and Villa in Late Antiquity", at 199-214.

43. Kanellou 2013. For other discussions of lighting, see for example Ellis 2006, with references to his earlier discussions. For the results of an experiment, Moullou 2015, with references to her other publications on the subject.

44. Zografou 2010, esp. 276-278.

45. For a definitive study, Podvin 2011. Then Patera 2010, esp. 258-260. There is much to be learned from the article by Sassi 2015, and I am grateful to her for providing me

case this far, but these examples provide a background against which a banqueter enjoying wine might be tempted to imagine his environment.

It is also worth putting this kind of interpretive argument alongside the one presented by Peter Stewart in discussing the role of representations of cult images on Roman lamps, a topic in some ways parallel to ours.<sup>46</sup> He suggests that in certain respects, these lamps may have been conceived as portable ‘shrines’, simulating in themselves the relationship between altars and cult statues. The statuesque motifs on the lamps would serve to strengthen such connotations and emphasize the allusion to cult. Particularly relevant are the bronze lamps he discusses that have versions of statues of Jupiter and of Cybele. While he admits that his approach is inconclusive, it strengthens the idea that lamps in use at night could serve as intermediaries between the user and some further mental image or concept, and that these images were specific in the person’s mind. More generally it reminds us also of the impact of images in the ancient world, a world much less jaded by images than ours, subjected as we are to so many in such a range of media.<sup>47</sup>

A further point is that it seems to have been typical of lamps of these kinds to evoke famous images, whether sculpted or painted. Despite initial offerings from Heres and, before him, Hafner, the topic still needs further investigation.<sup>48</sup> One might add as a further example the motif of Leda and the Swan, discussed for clay lamps by Heldring and for Late Antique bronze lamps by Franken.<sup>49</sup>

We do not know what it was that our other three figurines adorned, but lamps are as likely as other symposium equipment. They are all of much the same size. We may note in passing another possible case for one of our figures: the two-spouted bronze lamp from Priene in Berlin, that has a mask on the body between the spouts, preserves the feet of a figure on its lid and they are in much the same position as ours.<sup>50</sup> A difference is that there is a

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with a copy of it. *Logeion*’s reader points me to Callimachus 27 G.-P., which compares the look of a comic mask with ‘the lamps of Isis’ (*λύχνοις Ἰσιδος εἰδόμενον*).

46. Stewart 2000; see further Stewart 2003, especially in Chapter 7. Cf. Bolla 2015. On issues of Roman bronzes copying or echoing earlier work, see the essays by Mattusch and by Hallett in: Daehner and Lapatin 2015.

47. Squire 2016 was not available to me while I was preparing this article. It seems to have much that is relevant.

48. Heres 1967; Hafner 1949. But see now Lindros-Wohl 2012.

49. Heldring 1975; Franken 2007.

50. Berlin Misc. 10050. Wiegand – Schrader 1904, 322 no. 9, cf. p. 328, 384 fig. 486; Raeder 1983, 57 no. 279 fig. 8b; Heilmeyer 1988, 192-3 no. 46 (ill.); La Rocca 2010, 151 fig. 29; *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 2DB 1.



Fig. 10.

trace of something else at the forward edge of the lid, most likely a staff, an object that would not rule out the possibility of our man. It is worth remembering too that this lamp was associated with coins of around 200BC.

We may conclude with a final example, another lamp but one of a very different size, style and period (Fig. 10). It is one of a series presented in a memorable article by Jean Deneauve in *Antiquités Africaines* for 1987.<sup>51</sup> The series is stored in the Carthage museum and was found in local necropoleis. It is a terracotta stand for a lamp that was built on top of the column placed on the man's head, and as preserved it is 27.7cm tall, three or four times the height of the bronze figurines. The date is early third century as Deneauve argued convincingly both on grounds of style and by pointing out that the hairstyles of females in

the series adopt that of Julia Domna (AD 170–217). They therefore constitute an important body of evidence for the chronological ordering of actor-figures more generally, even allowing for an element of local style and possible provincial delay.

He is patently our figure and it is worth looking for a moment at this Late Antique treatment of a Hellenistic figure. His mantle comes down to just beyond his knees, a feature which, as we have already seen with the bronze figurines, seems to have been designed to remind the viewer that the figure originated in the 'classic' period. More typical of its time is of course

51. Musée National de Carthage (ex Musée Lavignerie) 08.1.1, from Carthage, Bordj Djedid necropolis. *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 6FL 8b. I take the illustration from Deneauve's publication, 219-220 no. Ac 2, fig. 21. He makes reference to Delattre's earlier work.

the cross-hatching on the leggings and sleeves; so too the way that the hair comes a long way down over his shoulders at the back; and then there is the form of the mask with its rather squashed appearance and especially the double row of hair over the top of the head, a feature we see also on slightly earlier and contemporary masks on Italian lamps. The robes are heavy. In terms of the particular iconography, there is the general pose and the manner of the dress, especially the himation. There is the turn and slight tilt of the head that we noticed in the bronzes. There is the speaking gesture with the right arm and hand: in a terracotta it cannot come forward as it does on the bronzes, but it is remarkable that in the frontal view, it looks as if it is. The hand gesture is not the two-finger one here, but another familiar one: the circle formed by the thumb and second finger, a slight variation in the tradition. It would have been interesting to know where and when it was introduced. It works better in this terracotta version with its limits on three-dimensionality. And then it is his right leg that is forward — as in the mosaic but not the bronze figurines, again perhaps suggesting an somewhat independent iconographic tradition.

To have such a precise recollection of a play in Carthage is, so far as I know, unique in our remaining evidence, and it is important in tracing the receptions of Menander in North Africa in the earlier part of the third century. We should also bear in mind that the artisan, the coroplast, had some sort of copy from which to work, and that he thought it was worth developing a mould from which he could make multiple copies of the figure. He must have been aware of a potential market among his customers. Presumably some of them could recite at least parts of our figure's speech.

It is not, however, our only case in Roman North Africa. In Cyrene there is the well-known 'Tomba dei Ludi Funerari' in the North Cemetery, known for many years from Pacho's visit in 1823 and rediscovered in the 1960s.<sup>52</sup> The tomb was extensively decorated and had a programmatic arrangement of scenes, including a *venatio*, a *munus gladiatorium* (with seven sets of gladiators), chariot races, athletic events, and then a frieze with musical and dramatic performances. This frieze uses the traditional performances as a frame for the others. On the left the comic scene comprises a Youth gesturing towards a Leading Slave with worried pose, left hand to chin. They stand before a door above which is the iambic inscription: ἀλλ' ἐψόφημεν ἢ θύρα· ὁ

52. See principally Bacchielli 1993, esp. pp. 91-94; Perusino 1993 (on the inscription). The old drawing of the scene published, for example as Bieber 1961, fig. 787, or Pickard-Cambridge 1946, fig. 120, is now clearly shown to be inaccurate.

πατήρ προέρχεται (= *PCG* viii. 1107, with refs.) It should represent a particular scene from a particular comedy. The date seems to be late second century AD, perhaps not far in time from the lamp-stand in Carthage and the mosaic in Antioch.

*Philadelphoi* was not one of Menander's most popular plays, and it certainly did not make its way into Alkiphron's slightly strange list that he put into his fictional letter from Glykera to the poet [4.19.19]: *Thais*, *Misoumenos*, *Thrasyleon*, *Epitrepontes*, *Rhaphizomene*, *Sikyon*[*ioi*?].<sup>53</sup> That list, written probably in the later part of the second century, is a subject that deserves its own discussion, but it may well be that its oddness was a reason for the speculation by Karavas and Vix that it could have been inspired by a set of what they called visual depictions, presumably mosaics.<sup>54</sup> The idea is not impossible, though we so far have no identified representations drawn from *Thais*, *Thrasyleon* or *Rhaphizomene*.<sup>55</sup> And it is curious that the extremely popular *Synaristosai* and *Theophoroumene* are not in the list.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, in the light of finds of Menander mosaics made in the eastern Mediterranean in more recent years, and especially in the area of Antioch, one may perhaps be more tempted by the idea that Alkiphron was a Syrian<sup>57</sup>; but that goes well beyond the scope of this article. All this said, we can now see that the discovery of this scene in the mosaic should not have been such a surprise. *Philadelphoi* had clearly enjoyed a role around the dinner-table in Rome in the first and second centuries, not to mention elsewhere, and it is time we defined the material evidence for other plays.<sup>58</sup>

53. See P. Granholm's edition and commentary (Uppsala 2012).

54. Karavas and Vix 2014, esp. 189. See also the very useful article by Funke 2016, esp. 232 where she mentions the picture idea but tends rather to think of "Menander's greatest hits". On the other hand it seems to me possible that the list was aimed at illustrating a range of themes from his plays.

55. The soldier in *MNC*<sup>3</sup> 5NP 10, from the Casa della Fontana Grande in Pompeii, could be a candidate for the key figure of *Thrasyleon*. A reason for *Thais* being here is well presented by Iversen 2011; see especially his final sentence.

56. Alkiphron nonetheless refers to *Theophoroumene* a few lines later.

57. See Granholm 13.

58. In writing this article I have deliberately not sought to speculate on what is Menandrian in the opening scene of Plautus' *Stichus*.

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