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GREEK MIME IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE  
(P.OXY. 413: *CHARITTON* AND *MOICHEUTRIA*)\*



Perhaps the greatest difficulty one faces in undertaking the study of ancient mime arises from the paucity of textual and archaeological evidence: with the exception of literary mimes (Theocritus, Herodas) and some scattered references, the evidence for mimes is limited to a few fragments mainly from papyri (generally short and occasionally questionable) and even fewer archaeological testimonies. The only period in the long history of mime for which the sources are slightly more generous is perhaps that of the Roman Empire. Mime appears to have flourished particularly during this time, due to the favourable social and economic circumstances that had emerged in the (partly Greek-speaking) Roman Empire. New forms of this protean genre also appeared at this time. According to the telling evidence provided by Plutarch — a widely travelled man — in Rome there were performed mimes with “multiple actors” and “dramatic plots” (*De soll. anim.* 973a: *μίμω πλοκὴν ἔχοντι δραματικὴν καὶ πολυπρόσωπον*), while mimes in general — here reference is made to Greece — were divided into *paignia* (short plays that were nothing more than burlesque scenes) and *hypotheses*, which are further defined as costly and lengthy *dramas* (i.e. stage plays), presumably indicating an elaborate plot (*Symposiaca* VII 8.712A):

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“οὐκοῦν” ἔφην ἐγὼ “μίμοί τινές εἰσιν, ὧν τοὺς μὲν ὑποθέσεις τοὺς δὲ παίγνια καλοῦσιν· ἀρμόζειν δ’ οὐδέτερον οἶμαι συμποσίῳ γένος, τὰς μὲν ὑποθέσεις διὰ τὰ μήκη τῶν δραμάτων καὶ τὸ δυσχορήγητον, τὰ δὲ παίγνια πολλῆς γέμοντα βωμολοχίας καὶ σπερμολογίας οὐδὲ τοῖς τὰ ὑποδήματα κομίζουσι παιδαρίοις, ἃν γε δὴ δεσποτῶν ἤ σωφρονούντων, θεάσασθαι προσήκει.

(“So then,” I said, “there are certain mimes, of which some are called *hypotheses* and others *paignia*. But I think that neither the former nor the latter are suitable as entertainment at symposia: the *hypotheses* due to the length of the plays and the expense of financing them, and the *paignia* because they are full of ribaldry and babbling, making them unfit to be seen even by the young slaves who carry the shoes of respectable gentlemen. [...]”)<sup>1</sup>

Basing his view mainly on this reference by Plutarch, Hermann Reich, in his extensive 1903 study of mime, argued that *hypotheses* were mimic plays resembling comedy in “extent, dramatic plot and number of Acts”, whereas the term *paignia* comprised all those mimic creations which fell short of *hypotheses* in these respects.<sup>2</sup> However, when Reich expressed this view, to which he gave particular weight (devoting to it approximately 200 pages of the first volume of *Der Mimus* — the second was not published), he was unaware of the two texts of major importance to the history of mime, contained in Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 413 (which, by an unfortunate coincidence, was also published in 1903). Helmut Wiemken discussed the two Oxyrhynchus texts in his important dissertation (1972); a major flaw in his study, however, is that it starts from *a priori* and dogmatic views, taking for granted that mime was always improvisatory and only in prose.<sup>3</sup> Given that these two texts are of exceptional importance to the study of the history of the genre during the Roman

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1. As S.-T. Teodorsson (*A Commentary on Plutarch's Table Talks, III (Books 7-9)*, Göteborg 1996, ad 712e) notes, “the classification in two kinds here has no good parallel”. A. Körte, *NJbb* 11 (1903) 538 (and after him Sudhaus [1906] 265), considers *paignion* as a broader term, which encompasses every mime with stage equipment, but his interpretation is not convincing.
  2. Reich (1903a) 418.
  3. Wiemken (1972) 22-24, 41.

Empire, I believe that a renewed assessment of the two papyric texts is now required.

### I. OXYRHYNCHUS PAPYRUS 413

The papyrus preserving the texts (P.Oxy. III 413 [Bodl. Libr. MS Gr. class. b4]) measures 22.9 x 42.3 cm.<sup>4</sup> On the recto [*Fig. I*] are preserved three columns (the latter two almost complete) written, as the original editors note, “in a good-sized semi-uncial hand” dated to the Antonine period. Crusius named this mime *Charition* after its female protagonist.<sup>5</sup> On the verso [*Fig. II*] are preserved three columns (of the first only a few letters survive) “in a much smaller and much more cursive hand” (Grenfell – Hunt). The text of the second complete surviving column is shorter than that of the third, with 6 cm of blank space below it. Crusius entitled the text of these columns *Moicheutria* (“The Adulteress”), while Wiemken gave the title *Giftmischermimus* (“Poisoner mime”). Next to these columns is a fourth, written in a slightly larger and more careful hand, but evidently by the same person as the other columns of the verso. This fourth column contains a different version of ll. 30-57 of *Charition*. It is particularly interesting to note that on the recto, at the end of the first column, ll. 30-36 have been marked with a circular stroke, with the marginal annotation (written upside-down): τὸ εἶσω ἢ ὡς μὲν[ , which is undoubtedly an indication that, with regard to the text enclosed within the circular stroke, the reader should see the verso.<sup>6</sup> The verso hand is dated later than the recto hand, but always also within the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD.<sup>7</sup>

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4. For the description of the papyrus see mainly Grenfell – Hunt (1903) 41; also Andreassi (2001a) 17ff.; Gammacurta (2006) 7.
  5. Since mimes were not given proper names as titles, Crusius himself later (1910) 99 proposed the title *Ἡ ἱερόδουλος*.
  6. See Gammacurta (2006) 10ff.
  7. See Grenfell – Hunt (1903) 41.

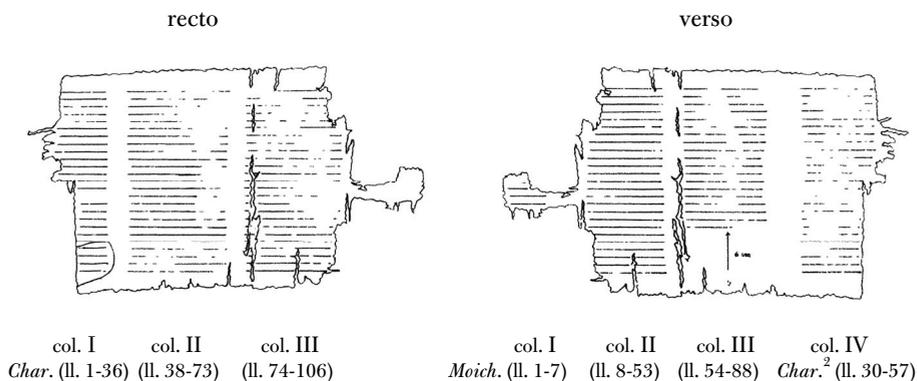


Fig. 1: Linear sketch of the two sides of the papyrus (Gammacurta [2006] 9)

Both mimes are written in Koine.<sup>8</sup> *Charition*, whose plot is set in India, with natives as characters in the play, contains sections written in (real or imaginary) Indian dialect. The Greek language of the text is — given the time of writing — by no means uncultured, while at certain points it is written in verse.<sup>9</sup> This is therefore not an exclusively prose or verse text, but a mixed form. The corrupt lines indicate that the text has been copied, meaning that the original was even earlier in date.<sup>10</sup> The actors, here identified with the characters of the play, are marked on the papyrus using Greek numerals and abbreviations: *A.* (= *Charition*), *B.* (= *fool* playing a slave), *Γ.* (= *Charition's* brother), *Δ.* (= ship's captain), *ΒΑΣ* (= King of the Barbarians), *Ζ.* (= ship's steersman), *Ζ.* = *ΑΑ* (= a

8. On the language of the two texts, see Winter (1906) 4-24. As regards the text of the papyric fragments of the mime and the palaeographical information on distinguishing between the symbols, I follow Cunningham's edition (1987).

9. There are Sotadeans (i.e. variations of Ionic tetrameters: 88-91), iambs (96-97, 105) and trochees (98-104, 106). Crönert (1909) 446 correctly observes that in both *Charition* and *Moicheutria* the speech shifts to verse at the most emotionally-charged points. On the language, see Wilamowitz (1907) 127: "im übrigen ist sie [sc. die Sprache] für ihre Zeit gar nicht ungebildet, nichts von Patois."

10. See Wilamowitz (1907) 127. Only guesses have been made as to the more precise dating of the original (some place the composition of the work as early as in the Hellenistic period, others at a later date, up to the early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD). See Andreassi (2001) 19.

barbarian woman),  $\text{C}$  =  $\Gamma\Upsilon\text{N}$  (= a barbarian woman),  $\text{Z}$  =  $\text{?}$ ,  $\text{KOI}$  (= all the members of the Chorus of barbarian men or women or Greeks).<sup>11</sup> There are also stage directions:  $\text{πορδ(ή)}$ ,  $\text{πέρδ(ει/εται)}$ ,  $\text{κροῦσ(ις)}$ ,  $\text{ἀναπεσ( )}$ <sup>12</sup>,  $\text{καταστολή}$ . Even more interesting is the fact that musical notations are marked at many points in the text:  $\overline{\text{ε}}$  (= *tumpanismos*),  $\overline{\text{ε}}$   $\text{πολ}$  (= *tumpanismos polys*),  $\overline{\text{ε}}\text{ε}'$  (= *tumpanismos* five times),  $\text{κ}$  (= *krotala*) and  $\text{κ-}$  (= *krotala* and *aulos*).<sup>13</sup>

The plot of the mime is as follows: Charition is the captive of the king of a barbarian tribe in India (possibly sold to them by pirates or captured following a shipwreck — perhaps a *mimicum naufragium*). A band of Greeks led by her brother ( $\Gamma$ ), which has arrived by ship, attempts to free her. While Charition, as a priestess, has sought sanctuary in the temple, the Greeks sit in front of the temple, leaderless, because her brother, thanks to the drunken captain of the ship ( $\Delta$ ), has been captured by the barbarians. The barbarians have gathered to attack.  $B$  (the Fool,  $\mu\omega\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$  or *stupidus*) uses a fart as a “biological weapon”, scattering the barbarians and forcing them to seek refuge by the nearby river Psolichus.

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11. The symbols and stage directions mentioned are clearly visible in *Fig. IV*. On the general use of symbols in order to indicate roles in the surviving fragments of mimes, see Andrieu (1954) 249-52; Jory (1963) 65-67; Wahl (1974) 164-69. On the existence of a Chorus in mime, cf. John Chrysostom *PG* 58, 644-45 and 61, 102; see also Pasquato (1976) 115-16.
  12. Manteuffel (1930b) 124 states categorically that the word *ἀναπεσ*, as read by the other editors, does not exist in the papyrus, and that the reading is actually *ἀναπλασ*, which he supposes to be an abbreviation of *ἀναπλασ(σόμενος)*. As far as I can make out, the  $\lambda$  and  $\alpha$  are not visible on the papyrus. Gammacurta (2006) 27-28 believes that the word is *ἀναπεσ(στικός)* = *ἀναπαιστικός* (as the original editors believed), but that the word here refers to the beat or loudness of the drum. Mekler (1909) 24-25 unconvincingly corrects *αναπεσ* to *ἀναπίεσμα*, arguing that it refers to a mechanism used to move the figures on a marionette stage (“Marionettenbühne”)!
  13. Regarding the symbols and abbreviations, Winter (1906) 32ff.; Knoke (1908) 3ff.; Manteuffel (1929) 40ff.; Wiemken (1972) 67ff. Manteuffel (1930b) 124-25 notes that there are three slightly different symbols for percussion. In line 57 he reads:  $\text{τ(υμπανισμός)}$ ,  $\text{ἀναπλασ(σόμενος)}$   $\text{τ(υμπανισμός)}$ ,  $\text{δισ(σός)}$   $\text{μέσ(σος)}$   $\text{τ(υμπανισμός)}$ ,  $\text{ὁ τό[πος]}$   $\text{ἀλλ[άσσειται]}$ . He translates as follows: “Trommelschlag, erneuerter Trommelschlag (und zwar einer anderen Art), doppelter mäßiger Trommelschlag, der Ort wird verändert”. Note that the symbol for percussion is also found in P.Berol. 13876 (= Cunn. no. 12), which preserves a short extract from a mime in two columns (only a few words of one column survive).

Presumably taking advantage of the uproar, the brother (*I*) escapes and joyfully meets his sister, who has left the temple. Their joy, however, is short-lived, for in the meantime the wives and daughters of the barbarians have returned from the hunt. They have Amazon features and carry huge bows.<sup>14</sup> The women exchange a few words, but misunderstand *B*'s greeting. With Charition's permission, *B* unleashes his biological weapon again and the barbarian women flee in terror like their menfolk.

Although there is now no enemy obstacle, the departure of the Greeks is delayed because *B* incites Charition to carry away the temple offerings to the Indian goddess. Charition refuses, saying that it is not right for those seeking the favour of the gods at a difficult moment to behave in this way. While Charition is scolding *B*, the barbarians reappear, men and women together this time, after having bathed in the river.<sup>15</sup> Charition goes back into the temple, while her brother orders *B* to give the barbarians undiluted wine to drink.

With the common Chorus of barbarians now appears their king (*ΒΑΣ*), who, speaking "Indian", orders abundant wine to be served. The gathering turns into a drinking bout. *B* at first angers the king when he asks for wine, but then participates fully in the feast, dancing and conversing with the barbarians in their dialect. During the feast, drums and cymbals sound, while the king sings solo (in Sotadean tetrameters – now in Greek!) and urges everyone to dance. The wine gradually has its effect (l. 96), causing king and Chorus to lose their senses and fall to the ground.

Charition, who has taken no part in the feast, is called out of the temple. As the ship's captain (*A*) is, like *B*, insensible with drink, Charition's brother orders the steersman (*Σ*) to bring the ship so they can leave. They all board the ship and Charition once more begs the goddess to save them. The play ends with the departure of the ship (in the performance the ship presumably moves away from the stage).

By contrast to *Charition* (whose original editors tellingly called it a "farce"), the plot of the *Moicheutria* is more elaborate:

The play takes place in a rich rural villa, where many slaves work. At least 37 lines are missing from the beginning of the text, while another 7 are preserved in a very corrupt state. (From the 2<sup>nd</sup> column onwards, however, the text can be read without

14. Skutsch (1914) 514 aptly entitles this scene "Amazonomachy".

15. This may be a parody of an actual Indian ritual, cf. *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* 58: εἰς ὃν (sc. τόπον = Comar) βουλόμενοι τὸν μέλλοντα αὐτοῖς χρόνον ἱεροὶ γενέσθαι ἐρχόμενοι ἀπολούνται καὶ χῆροι μένουσιν αὐτοῦ; τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ γυναῖκες; ἱστορεῖται γὰρ τὴν θεὸν ἐκεῖ ἐπιμεῖναι κατὰ τινα χρόνον καὶ ἀπολεοῦσθαι. See Crevatin (2009) 200.

much difficulty.)<sup>16</sup> I provide – for reasons that will become clear below – only a précis of the surviving text, without any hypothetical supplementation of the plot.

(1<sup>st</sup> entrance) The Mistress of the house, who wishes to have intercourse with the slave Aesopus, orders the other slaves to call him. Aesopus, in spite of the Mistress's threats to have him whipped, refuses to obey, because, as it emerges from what the Mistress says, he is in love with the slave Apollonia. The Mistress charges her trusted slave with carrying out the punishment, grows angrier and threatens Aesopus with more severe punishments. She then orders the other slaves to take the bound Aesopus and Apollonia to the forest, tie them to trees and kill them. The Mistress enters the house.

(2<sup>nd</sup> entrance). The suspicious Mistress wants to offer a sacrifice to the gods, during which the slave Spinther is called upon to swear that she has not been deceived. The ceremony is not completed, due to the clamour of slaves who discover Apollonia inside the house. The slaves are ordered to find Aesopus and bring him back dead.

(3<sup>rd</sup> entrance). The Mistress demands to see the dead Aesopus. When she sees him, she breaks into lamentations. Her trusted slave Malacus approaches to comfort her, but is presumably aroused sexually.<sup>17</sup> The Mistress and Malacus enter the house.

(4<sup>th</sup> entrance). The Mistress comes on stage with her now completely trusted slave Malacus, to whom she reveals her plan to kill everyone in the house, sell the property and leave. The first victim will be her old husband, to whom she will offer poisoned mead, supposedly in reconciliation. Her original thought, that Malacus should call him, is followed by the better idea that the Parasite should do it.

(5<sup>th</sup> entrance). The Mistress sees the second (supposed) corpse and demands to see Apollonia's face. She asks the Parasite to invite the Old Man, while she enters the house to prepare the fatal meal (*ἄριστον*) for the slaves.

(6<sup>th</sup> entrance). The Mistress comes on stage with Malacus, who is carrying the poisoned cup. Spinther empties out the poison and replaces it with plain wine. The Parasite deliberately drinks from the cup, and, terrified, the Mistress sees him. She

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16. In this mime, too, I follow Cunningham's numbering and division of scenes, but not necessarily his text, since his edition presents difficulties: apart from the fact that he does not note the technical symbols in the text itself, he uses symbols (e.g. paragraph marks) not present in the papyrus and ignores other editors (e.g. Manteuffel's commentary on l. 57), while the distribution of parts in the final scene seems completely incomprehensible to me.

17. On Malacus, see Andreassi (2000), who concludes that "il personaggio di Malakos sia stato caratterizzato da effeminatezza e movenze femminili" (326). I may add to his comments on the derivation from the adjective *μαλακός* that the rising of the stress denotes a pet name (for instance, *πυρρός* > *Πύρρος*), see L. Grasberger, *Die griech. Stichnamen*, Würzburg<sup>2</sup> 1883, 30.

orders the slaves to carry him inside, so she can be informed of whatever happens to him before her husband is. Spinther comes on stage with the slaves and the Parasite. The Mistress and Malacus enter the house.

(7<sup>th</sup> *entrance*). The Mistress and Malacus appear on stage again. The Mistress is happy that everything is going as planned. The Parasite comes on stage and, as part of the slaves' plan, informs her that her husband is dead. She openly declares that her plan has worked.

(8<sup>th</sup> *scene*). The slaves bring the "corpse" of the Old Man on stage.<sup>18</sup> Spinther or the Parasite (as all the editors believe) or, more probably, the Mistress (as I will argue) pretends to mourn him, but is interrupted by Malacus, who mourns him with abusive words. The Old Man rises in a fury, begins to beat Malacus and charges Spinther with punishing him further. When he sees the "body" of Aesopus (and then that of Apollonia), he asks what has happened, but Spinther reassures him that they are both unharmed. The play probably concluded with a song, perhaps referring to the Mistress's punishment.<sup>19</sup>

In the *Moicheutria* it is certainly noteworthy that, perhaps with the exception of the final scene, the Mistress herself is speaking throughout the preserved text. There are no symbols denoting a change of the person speaking in the final scene, nor do we find traces of musical notation. This, however, does not mean that there are no symbols in the text: (a) diagonal dashes (/) occur at 84 points in the text; (b) at ll. 11 (= 116 G-H, after the word *ἰδοῦ*) and 81 (= 185 G.-H., after the phrase *οὐαί σοι*) comes the symbol ≡/, probably indicating a beating (a slap or a stroke of the whip);<sup>20</sup> (c) at l. 70 (= 179 G-H, after the question *τί οὖν*

18. Cf. Men. *Aspis* 329ff.

19. The beginning of the song is found, according to Crusius (as mentioned by Sudhaus [1906] 263-4 and Manteuffel [1930a] 48), in the iambic dimeter *μένουσι σῶοι, δέσποτα*. Cf. the parallels provided by Manteuffel, and also Choricus, *Apol.* 30: *ἐπεὶ δὲ ὄλον παιδιά τις ἐστι τὸ χοῆμα, τὸ πέρας ἀντοῖς εἰς ᾧδὴν τινα καὶ γέλωτα λήγει*.

20. See Lyngby (1928) 56, who very specifically believes these to be slaps. In l. 15ff., however, there is reference to a whip, and sticks are mentioned in l. 87, cf. Wiemken (1972) 102; Andreassi (2001a) 111-12; Gammacurta (2006) 30. Earlier scholars believed that the symbol indicated change of speaker: Grenfell – Hunt (1903) 44; Winter (1906) 50; Crusius (1914) 110; Sudhaus (1906) 262; Rostrup (1915) 89; Manteuffel (1930) 49. Cunningham (1987) p. 47 distinguishes between two slightly different symbols in l. 11 and 81, but, as Gammacurta observes, "[q]uesta trascrizione non risolve il problema dell'interpretazione". A similar symbol (three parallel

θέλεις;) there is the symbol  $\neg$  (actually a dipole:  $\neg$ ),<sup>21</sup> probably indicating the end of the Mistress's part;<sup>22</sup> (*d*) finally, at l. 74 (=181 G-H, after the phrase *λέξω τί με δεῖ λέγειν*) comes the stage direction *ΑΓΩΝ*.<sup>23</sup> In order to understand the *Moicheutria* as a whole and the intended function of the papyric text, we must provide satisfactory answers to the questions regarding the use of stage symbols.

The oblique dashes ( / ) were originally thought to indicate punctuation, i.e. division into clauses.<sup>24</sup> This interpretation is undercut by the simple fact that the symbol is used to delimit very different verbal units (from single words [e.g. 11, 73] to a text including several sentences [e.g. 19-23, 60-64]). It is also hard to see what use such punctuation would be in a text like this. The most probable explanation is that the dashes indicate pauses, which were followed either by words which have not been recorded on the papyrus (by the speakers or the protagonist herself) or by mimic gestures and action.<sup>25</sup> However, the main question here is not so much the precise meaning of the oblique dashes, as the reason why they are also present in the final scene (where, as all

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lines) is found, as far as I know, only in P.Oxy. 696 (ll. 64 and 96), but presumably the meaning is different, as this is a text by Thucydides.

21. The existence of the symbol is indicated nowhere in Cunningham's edition. For the use of the dipole in papyri, see McNamee (1992) 15-17.
22. See Sudhaus (1906) 261, who correctly notes that there must have been a corresponding symbol at the beginning of the text; Wiemken (1972) 101; Andreassi (2001a) 149; Gammacurta (2006) 31, who observes: "Non è necessario supporre l'uscita fisica di scena dell'attore che interpreta la protagonista, ma certamente da quel momento in poi non compare più il personaggio dell'adultera."
23. Both the symbols and stage direction are clearly visible in *Fig. IV*.
24. See, e.g. Grenfell – Hunt (1903) 44: "The sentences are in the original divided off by an oblique dash"; Manteuffel (1930a) 139. Sudhaus (1906) 248 also believes this to be a punctuation mark, but one not consistently used.
25. See Wiemken (1972) 101; similar views had been expressed by Rostrup (1915) 102 and Lyngby (1928). Andreassi (2001a) 104ff. attempts to interpret each case separately. For the use of this (generally very common) symbol, see McNamee (1992) 17, who notes: "In a large number of papyri, however, its function is obscure. [...] This mark, even more defensibly than the dipole and chi, was a 'maid of all work'". On the use of diagonal dashes in the text (rather than in the margin), see E. G. Turner *apud* O. M. Pearl – R. P. Winnington-Ingram, "A Michigan Papyrus with Greek Notation", *JEA* 51 (1965) 186 n. 2.

editors suppose, the Mistress does not speak), and, ultimately, for whom these textual indications were intended. I will return to this question below.

The stage direction *ΑΓΩΝ*, which Crusius correctly linked to the extract from the *Moicheutria* rather than to the closer neighbouring column of *Charition*, seems, at first sight, obscure. Grenfell and Hunt took it to be an abbreviation of the word *ἄγων(ία)* or *ἄγων(ισμα)*. Sudhaus linked it to the stage direction *ΚΑΤΑΣΤΟΛΗ* in *Charition* and thought it might mean “Schlußkampf, Action”.<sup>26</sup> The stage direction almost certainly refers to the text of the *Moicheutria*. But here there is an inexplicable error in all the editions without exception (Crusius, Knoke, Manteuffel, Cunningham): the word *ΑΓΩΝ* is not written in the margin of l. 67 Cunn. = 178 G-H (i.e. after the question *παράσιτε, τί γέγονεν;*), but quite obviously in the margin of l. 74 Cunn. = 181 G-H (after the phrase *λέξω τί με δεῖ λέγειν*). Thus the stage direction does not refer to the whole of the final scene (and therefore does not correspond exactly to the *ΚΑΤΑΣΤΟΛΗ*), but *only* to the (verbal) “contest” between the two characters in mourning the old man.

At this point in the play there is also a difficulty with the distribution of the verses among the characters, as the alternation of speakers is not specifically indicated on the papyrus itself. According to all extant editions, in the final scene (71-84) of the surviving text, either three (Cunningham 1987 and 2002) or four (Crusius 1914, Manteuffel 1930a, Wiemken 1972, Andreassi 2005a) other persons speak, but not the Mistress herself (see APPENDIX). But how can one imagine a play in which the actors sometimes improvise and at other times speak precisely determined words? Such a thing seems inexplicable if not utterly improbable. In my view, the explanation is that all the editions give an erroneous picture of the alternation of speakers. How could the old Master be mourned by slaves or acquaintances (as the Parasite might have been), but not by his closest relative, his wife? Is it not possible that

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26. Sudhaus (1906) 261. Of the later editors, Wiemken (1972) 58 and 77 believes, albeit without discussing the matter further, that the stage direction belongs to *Charition*. In his 1914 edition, Crusius abandoned the interpretation *ἄγων(ία)* = *death-throes* he had provided in the 1905 edition.

the wife, who intended to poison all the slaves, would pretend to mourn in order not to raise suspicion? And in any case, who would ask for a *φαιὸν ἱμάτιον* (“brown garment”) for mourning, if not the wife of the “dead” man?<sup>27</sup> Is it likely that a slave (or the Parasite) would introduce the lamentation with the phrase *λέξω τί με δεῖ λέγειν* (“I shall say what I ought to say”) or, moreover, declare that he had lost his *παρρησίαν* (“freedom of speech”) because of the old Master’s death? Is it at all possible that a slave or Parasite would call his Master his *δόξα* (“glory”) or *ἐλευθέριον φῶς*?<sup>28</sup> Evidently not. All these expressions are obviously uttered by a relative of the “deceased”, in this case the Mistress *herself*. The editors, misled by the dialogue between Spinther and the Parasite which follows, thought that the whole dialogue takes place between these two persons from the start. This is a misapprehension: the Mistress demands a mourning garment, while the two characters (Parasite and Spinther) who know exactly what she has done comment, in a scene “apart”, on the utterly hypocritical intention of the Mistress, who then goes on to lament her husband until Malacus cynically undertakes to continue the mourning — making it an actual *ἀγών* or contest between them<sup>29</sup>. According to my reading, the text of the final scene should be distributed among the characters as follows:

71 <ΚΥΡΙΑ> Σπινθήρ, ἐπίδοσ μοι φαιὸν ἱμάτιον. /

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27. Although most editors, following the *editio princeps*, print *φόνον ἱκανόν*, the reading *φαιὸν ἱμάτιον* must be considered certain, in spite of the fact that certain letters cannot be made out clearly (see also A.D. Knox, “Herodes and Callimachus”, *Philologus* 81 [1926] 243, who mentions that the reading is confirmed, following checking, by Hunt). As far as I can see, the first word clearly contains an *ι* rather than a *ν*, while the second letter is *α* rather than *ο*. The second word, whose central part is illegible, contains more letters than the six required for the reading *ἱκανόν*.
28. In laments, references to light generally denote life; see M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, revised ed., Lanham<sup>2</sup>2002, 187. I therefore suppose that the phrase *ἐλευθέριον φῶς* here is equivalent to “a decent life”.
29. I believe that the closest parallel as to content appears to be the indication *διώκει* in the mime of P. Berol. 13876 (Manteuffel had already noted that the word is a stage direction, asking, in the critical apparatus of his edition, “an nota ad agendum pertinens?”). However, we should not exclude the possibility that the word *ἀγών* may also indicate here something more technical.

- <ΣΠΙΝΘΗΡ> παράσιτε, φοβο[ῦ]μαι μὴ γελάσω. /  
 <ΠΑΡΑΣΙΤΟΣ> καὶ καλῶς λέγεις. /  
 <ΚΥΡΙΑ> λέξω τί με δεῖ λέγειν. /  
 75 πᾶ[τ]ερ κύριε, τί με καταλείπεις; /  
 ἀπολώλεκά μου τὴν παρορησ(ίαν). /  
 τὴν δόξ(αν). /  
 τὸ ἐλευθέριον φῶς. /  
 σὺ μου ἦς ὁ κύριος. /  
 80 <ΜΑΛΑΚΟΣ> τούτωι ἄφες. ἐγὼ αὐτὸν θρηγήσω. <sup>μόνον ἀληθῶς οὐ λέγω.</sup> /  
 οὐαί σοι, ταλαίπωρε, ἄκληρε, ἀ[λγ]εινέ, ἀναφρόδιτε, οὐαί σοι. ≡ / οὐαί μοι. /  
 <ΔΕΣΠΟΤΗΣ> οἶδα γάρ σε ὄστισπ[ε]ρ εἶ, <sup>μισσο<ύ>μενε.</sup> Σπινθήρ, ξύλα ἐπι-  
 τοῦτον. /  
 ὄδος πάλιν τίς ἐστιν; /  
 <ΣΠΙΝΘΗΡ> μένουσι σῶοι, δέσποτα.

## II. THE PURPOSE OF THE TWO MIMES

Having dealt with the content and the technical aspects of the two texts, we may now move on to their character and significance. When the papyrus was published, it was not realized that it did not contain full dramatic texts intended to be read, but rather technical texts. Their particularity was demonstrated by a Danish scholar, Egill Rostrup, who, being an actor and a stage director, was familiar with the art of the theatre and discerned the technical nature of the papyrus: “il faut que le manuscrit soit un document théâtral de nature technique, rédigé au profit de la mise en scène”.<sup>30</sup> The papyrus is especially important from this point of view. There is no doubt, of course, that the two texts are very different. *Charition* contains directions for the persons (actors or characters) appearing on stage, parts of their lines, musical notations (which may indicate the beginning of intense action on stage)<sup>31</sup> or specific sounds, as well as a stage direction referring to the final section of the play. There are two possibilities: this is either a *canevaccio* (scenario)

30. Rostrup (1915) 79.

31. On the use of musical instruments in *Charition*, see Skulimowska (1966).

like those of the *Commedia dell'arte*,<sup>32</sup> or a prompt-book, useful to a prompter or “stage director” (in a troupe of mimes, this role would certainly be played by the archimime or the troupe leader). The first possibility (the *canevaccio*) is improbable: the text contains many details of the characters’ lines, but omits (apart from the transition from one scene to the next) what happens in each scene. The scenario of the *Commedia dell'arte* is, as we know, completely different: it contains the basics of the action for the actors, while its chief advantage lies in the fact that it is much more quickly and easily written than a dramatic text.<sup>33</sup> In the case of *Charition*, therefore, we have a text that was probably intended for the “stage director” of the performance (a “Regie-Entwurf” according to Wiemken), the prompter, or — less likely — the musician (Rostrup).<sup>34</sup>

The *Moicheutria*, on the other hand, provides no indication of who is speaking, even at the end of the play, where several characters speak in alternation. The greatest part by far of the surviving text (80 of the 88 verses) comprises the script of a single character, the Mistress. Furthermore, although all the symbols (perhaps with the exception of the two indicating a beating) refer to the scenic action, this is not, as in *Charition*, with the purpose of organising the whole performance, but rather of organising the words and movements of a specific actor on stage. The most remarkable feature of the text is the following: throughout the section where the Mistress is speaking, only her own lines are provided, whereas in the final scene we have the spoken parts of all the participants except for her, who is presumably absent. So who would have used the text as it stands? Several scholars have submitted the view that the whole mime was intended to be played by a single actor (a solo performance, in

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32. Cf. already Reich (1903b) 2685: “vielleicht sollte sie (sc. die Farce) auch als eine Art erweiterter Canevas, wie man ihn bei der extemporierten *Commedia dell'arte* und auch bei dem extemporierten *Mimus* brauchte, der Aufführung zugrunde gelegt werden”.

33. See Andrews (1993) 169ff., especially 171.

34. See Wiemken (1972) 75-76; cf. Rostrup (1915) 78 (“un scénario, dont les lacunes sont destinées à être suppléées par une action mimique ou par des improvisations”); Reich (1925) 86 (“ein Merkzettel für die musikalische Begleitung”); Cunningham (2002) 357 (“the musician’s copy”).

other words).<sup>35</sup> This seems totally improbable: it is very hard to imagine that one actor played eight different parts. Even more telling, to me, is the fact that, while in some cases one could argue that the answers to the questions asked are implied in the Mistress's words themselves (e.g. 31-33), in others there is no answer whatsoever in the text (e.g. 38-40: *μαστιγία, οὐ θέλ(εις) ποιεῖν τὰ ἐπιτασσόμε(να); / τί γέγονε[ν; ἦ] μαίνη;* / *εἰσελθόντ(ες) ἴδετε τίς ἐστίν. / τί φησιν; [..]ν ἄρα;*).<sup>36</sup> Therefore, what we possess is not the full text of a mime, but the text of the *part* of the archimima.<sup>37</sup> This is confirmed by the symbol marking the end of the Mistress's part before the final scene, and by the stage direction *ΑΓΩΝ* which specifies the character of that scene. The question why the text is not homogeneous, but includes the lines of other persons in the final scene, is hard to answer with any certainty. Perhaps it was of some practical use to the protagonist (as the stage direction *ΑΓΩΝ* may have been), which is not easy for us to grasp. In any case, if what we are dealing with is a “document théâtral de nature technique” and a copy from a more complete text, there could be many explanations for such an inconsistency.

Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 413, however, is not of particular significance *only* because it is a technical text, indeed one that is “très intime”. We are now certain that such texts existed and circulated in antiquity, alongside selections from dramatic texts with scenic directions intended for performance on stage or, in any case, in public.<sup>38</sup> The particular signifi-

35. This view was first expressed by Reich (1903b) 2681 (with reference to Wilamowitz's theory of “rezitativer Mimus”); Wilamowitz (1907) 127; W. Schubart, *Einführung in die Papyruskunde*, Berlin 1918, 139 (who, without further explanation, holds that we have two different mimes in the case of the *Moicheutria*); Gammacurta (2006) 31; cf. Wiemken (1972) 233 n. 113.

36. See Kehoe (1969) 86-87.

37. See Rostrup (1915) 101; Wiemken (1972) 104.

38. Here I will refer only to the case of P.Oxy. 4546 (1<sup>st</sup> c. BC — mid-1<sup>st</sup> c. AD). From *Alcestis* ll. 344-82 it contains only the 30 lines spoken by Admetus, omitting those of his interlocutors (Chorus, Alcestis), and has reasonably been supposed to have been intended as an actor's script; see Marshall (2004) 35ff. The following papyri are also of interest: P.Sorb. Inv. 2252 (c. 250 BC), containing *Hippolytus* without the chorus songs (“a pared-down, non musical version of *Hippolytus* — a ‘touring version’ for example”: Marshall [2004] 30); P.Leid. Inv. 510 (mid-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC), containing lyric

cance of P.Oxy. 413 lies in the fact that it allows us to draw conclusions on how mimic troupes worked, and potentially on the evolution of mime itself. The fundamental question arising from the study of the two texts is, in my opinion, whether mime in this period (and perhaps even earlier) was based mainly on improvisation, using a written text only to a very small degree, for practical purposes (like, for instance, the *Commedia dell'arte*), or whether it was based on written dramaturgy, also using, for practical purposes (rehearsals, stage direction), texts like those which have come down to us. The question by no means implies that mime did not make extensive use of improvisation, nor that the actors showed great respect for the texts. In comic theatre of this type, improvisation must have played a major part, while the written text, as is often the case in theatrical practice (particularly comedy) even today, would not have been regarded as sacrosanct. But to what extent was one or the other the case? How did contemporary mimic troupes work? In what sense was mime “popular theatre”?

Wiemken, the scholar who furthered the study of imperial Greek mime more than anyone else after Reich, held that the mimic theatre of the period was not based on dramatic texts but that it was a “theatre of improvisation” (*Stegreiftheater*) and that the performers improvised their dialogues in full on the stage, or, at the most, shaped them themselves during the preparation of the performance (during which the part of “stage director” was played by another mime).<sup>39</sup> Regarding the first

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songs from *Iphigenia in Aulis* with musical symbols; P.Oxy. 409 + 2655 (2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD), with extracts from Menander’s *Colax*; P.Oxy. 2458 (3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD), containing extracts from Euripides’ *Cresphontes*. All the papyri containing extracts of dramatic texts from anthologies or intended for performance are listed by Gentili (1979) 19-20. A different view on the staging of similar extracts is expressed by S. Nervegna, “Staging Scenes or Plays? Theatrical Revivals of ‘Old’ Greek Drama in Antiquity”, *ZPE* 162 (2007) 14-42.

39. Wiemken (1979) 422: “Alles, was wir über die Spielpraxis der Mimen aus der Überlieferung erfahren, deutet darauf hin, daß der griechische Mimus *Stegreiftheater* war – daß seine Darsteller ihre Dialoge auf der Bühne improvisierten. [...] Was auf der Mimenbühne gesprochen wurde, blieb also, wenn nicht zur Gänze dem Einfallsreichtum und der Schlagfertigkeit der Darsteller, so doch zumindest der Einstudierung – die wahrscheinlich einer der Mimen als Regisseur leitet – überlassen.” Similar views had naturally been expressed before Wiemken. See, for example, Bonaria (1965) 1 (“il

mime (*Charition*), which he considers to be just a “rough sketch” (a mould which the actors would fill out with words themselves or by consultation with the stage director), Wiemken writes characteristically that it was doubtless neither spoken on stage nor meant to be spoken:<sup>40</sup>

Dennoch kann nicht die Rede davon sein, daß der Text, den das Fragment bietet, auf der Bühne gesprochen worden wäre oder gesprochen werden sollte [...]. Als Handexemplar (oder nur Gedächtnisstütze) des Mimenregisseurs aufnotiert, dient es als grobe Skizze der Inszenierung; die Ausfüllung der einzelnen, im Entwurf nur vorgezeichneten Szenen bleibt dabei dem Übereinkommen zwischen Schauspieler und Regisseur (wenn nicht der Phantasie des Schauspielers allein) überlassen.

As regards *Moicheutria*, he considers this to be the text of a performer’s part, but thinks this is all there would have been of the mime:

hätte ein Textbuch existiert, so wäre die Niederschrift des Rollenauszugs, das Festhalten einer nicht unkomplizierten Rollenaufgabe also, weitgehend überflüssig gewesen.<sup>41</sup>

Wiemken even believes that the two mimes were played by the same troupe, consisting of seven actors, and that the necessity of distributing the roles among these artists was what led to the second version of *Charition* being written.<sup>42</sup>

I do not believe that this view of Wiemken is correct, nor does it provide a satisfactory explanation for the two texts: it does not explain, *inter alia*, why a “popular” theatre troupe would work with such different texts (a “staging draft” on the one hand and an actor’s ‘part’ on the other), why “interpretative theatre” needed an extensive text of spoken lines such as *Charition*, and why an actor’s ‘part’ such as the *Moicheutria* includes a scene in which other people speak. In my opinion, all these issues can be explained in a different way: we are dealing with a

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mimo era solo parzialmente scritto, e il resto, come nella rinascimentale commedia dell’arte, era affidato all’improvvisazione e all’estro degli attori”).

40. Wiemken (1972) 75; cf. Wiemken (1979) 411-12.

41. Wiemken (1979) 413; cf. Wiemken (1972) 104ff.

42. Wiemken (1972) 76-79, 108-109.

technical manuscript, containing texts derived (i.e. copied) from complete dramatic texts.

In order to understand the character of technical texts in the theatre and their relationship to dramatic texts, I will adduce the example of a ‘popular’ theatre of another age, on which we have a reasonable amount of information, and which may facilitate our understanding of the texts under study. In the ‘popular’ Elizabethan theatre of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century, we know that things worked as follows: acting troupes had to have a rich repertoire in order to perform different plays (perhaps even every day for a certain period), leaving little time for rehearsals. They therefore bought whole plays and the troupe scribes produced three different types of manuscript: (a) a prompt-book with the entrances, exits and sound effects, (b) actor’s ‘parts’ containing only the lines of the specific part, except for cues from the other actors and a few stage directions, and (c) the plot of the play, which provided the names of the dramatis personae and actors in each scene, and used to remind the actors of the number and sequence of their entrances.<sup>43</sup> Bearing this example in mind, I believe we can, finally, understand what is going on with the mimes of P.Oxy. 413. The papyrus preserves texts corresponding (partly) to the first two categories of ‘popular’ Elizabethan theatre: a script (*Charition*) containing the dramatic text (or at least a text originating from it), used by the prompter or the stage director at the performance, and an actor’s ‘part’ (*Moicheutria*). In both cases, the existence of a complete dramatic text must be presupposed. I will now attempt to show why this is the only convincing interpretation.

The surviving texts themselves are the strongest indication of the existence of complete dramatic texts now lost. Wiemken himself opines that there is no difference between the “idea of a play” (*Spielidee*), which can be developed through improvisation, and the “dramatic sketch” (*dramatischer Entwurf*), except as regards the type of processing that follows: the dramatic poet knows only the limitations of language and intends to create a literary work, while the “creator of an improvisation” (*Improvisator*) takes the circumstances of the specific scenic action into

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43. For the following, see Hattaway (1982) 50-54.

account.<sup>44</sup> The distinction he makes, is, in my view, rather arbitrary, at least concerning the dramatic poets of antiquity, but I will not go into this. I will, however, single out a characteristic he notes in scripts containing dialogue (as *Charition* does) which he believes are intended for improvisation: they contain nothing more than the rough sketch of the roles and the development of the play's plot (and perhaps points of practical significance to the staging, such as those where there is music and dancing).<sup>45</sup> This criterion does not, of course, apply to the second mime, the *Moicheutria*, since the whole piece spoken by the Mistress can only be meaningful as a text to be learnt. Already, though, this fact implies major difficulties to the aforementioned theory of "improvised theatre": the same troupe that, according to Wiemken, performed both plays, not only worked in a different way in each case, but, most importantly, did not allow any latitude for improvisation to the actor whom one would expect to be the improviser *par excellence*, the archimima. Let us see if this criterion applies to the first mime.

In *Charition* there are sections of dialogue that cannot be explained by the practice set out above, since it is not clear how they advance the plot. One example is Charition's advice to the Fool to get the natives drunk on wine (49ff.), which is followed by this dialogue:

B. ἐὰν δὲ μὴ θέλωσιν οὕτως πίνειν;  
 Γ. Μωρέ, ἐν [τ]ούτοις τοῖς τόποις οἶνος [..]. ὦν..[  
 λαιπὸν [δὲ] ἐὰν τοῦ γένους δράξω[ν]τα[ι] ἀπειρο[ί]α [πο-  
 θοῦντ[ε]ς] ἄκρατον πίνουσιν.  
 Β. Ἐγὼ αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν τρυγίαν διακο[ν]ῶ.

Such a dialogue, which neither advances the action nor is suitable for repetition, is meaningless in an improvisatory text; it only makes sense as part of a dramatic text.

44. Wiemken (1972) 155-56.

45. Wiemken (1972) 157: "Der Dialogtext jedoch geht nirgends über die seiner Aufgabe, Rollen und Spielverlauf zu skizzieren, entsprechende Breite hinaus — es sei denn, er würde zum Träger weiterer der Regieabsicht untergeordneter Effekte (Musik, Tanz, Finale-Crescendo)."

A further indication is provided by the linguistic interventions in the “Indian” text.<sup>46</sup> Even if this is an actual Indian dialect — the opposite is equally likely, in view of comic parallels such as Pseudartabas’ speech in the *Acharnians* — the Oxyrhynchus public would certainly not have understood it. This is proved by the “translation” provided at certain points (ll. 58, 66, 93). What sense would it have made, in an improvisatory play, to cross out, for instance in ll. 13ff., the ‘Indian’ word *οδωσα* and correct it, immediately above, to *αδωα*;<sup>47</sup> Such interventions in the text, intended for an audience which did not understand the language, would only have been meaningful if the text were important to the scenic action.

There is a further element that effectively rules out the hypothesis that the performance was improvised: the musical symbols along with the stage directions. Both refer to specific points in the text and presup-

46. Regarding these corrections, see Manteuffel’s critical notes (unfortunately the relevant information in Cunningham’s notes is incomplete).

47. Regarding the correction to l. 13, Cunningham remarks in his critical notes “fort. a scriba lateris uers.” On the issue of the foreign language (it is debatable whether it is an actual Indian dialect or simply a mixture of linguistic elements), see the bibliography in Wiemken (1972) 225 and 226 n. 6. The translation by B.A. Saletore, *Ancient Karnataka, I: History of Tuluva*, Poona 1936, 584-97, arguing that the language of the text is based on the Kannada tongue of Southern India, is not very satisfactory. I am not in a position to judge the view of P. Shivaprasad Rai, “Sariti: A 2000 Year Old Bilingual Tulu-Greek Play”, *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics* 14 (1985) 320-30, that it is a Tulu language (he even quotes the English translation of part of the mime), but his study does not appear to follow scholarly standards. One example is his view (p. 322) of the name “Charition”: “There is no such name as Charition in Greek or Tulu, whereas Sariti is a common name in Tulu, meaning the flowing river or Lady Nektar.” Yet, the name is found in many Greek inscriptions, particularly in Roman times (see, e.g., Athens: *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 8313; 13056; *Agora* 17, 1013; Euboea: *IG XII* 9, 767; Delos: *ID* 2619, 22; Cos: Δ. Μπρονάκης, *Ανέκδοτες επιγραφές της Κω*, Αθήνα 2008, no. 117; Lydia: *SEG* 31, 1018); also in papyri: see, for example, P.Tebt. 1.82 (115 BC); P.Prag. 1.11 (1<sup>st</sup> c. AD); P.Lond. 3.901 (c. 75-125 AD); P.Fay. 100 (99 AD); P.Meyer 9 (147 AD); P.Meyer 8,3 (151 AD); BGU 9.1897+9.1896 (166 AD); BGU 9.1899 (172 AD). In any case, the problem of the ‘Indian’ language of *Charition* cannot be considered solved. Hall (2010), who notes the possibility of trading links between the Greeks of Egypt and West India (412), considers — perhaps rightly from a certain point of view — the issue of the Indian language to be “perhaps the most interesting aspect of the mime” (413).

pose precision of the execution. In some cases the musical symbols are placed between ‘Indian’ words spoken by the same person (e.g. 79-80: *B. μάρθα* ✕ *μαριθουμα* εδμαϊμαϊ ✕ *μαϊθο* [ | *θαμοννα* *μαρθα* ✕ *μαριθουμα*.  $\bar{\epsilon}$  [...] *τὸν* [ ]<sup>48</sup>, or in passages which are not in verse (e.g. 72: *B. αἶ.* ✕ *μὴ ἀηθίαν· παύσασθε.  $\bar{\epsilon}$  ✕ αἶ ✕ τί ποιεῖτε;*).<sup>49</sup> Such an application of musical symbols would be meaningless in a text which the actors were *not* supposed to follow faithfully on stage.

The impression, moreover, that *Charition* is only the outline of a play intended for the stage is due, in my view, largely to the fact that the questions of the literary origin and of the original extent of the play have been overlooked, with the result that the mime is often thought to have been more or less the same text as that preserved on the papyrus. However, the impression created by the extent of the surviving text is probably misleading. Since the issue of the original length of the papyric text is connected with that of the plot of the play, which in turn is based on other plays, I believe we should examine the preserved text in relation to the specific works on which it draws thematically.

As O. Crusius noted as early as 1904, *Charition* reworks Euripidean motifs from *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Helen* and *Cyclops*.<sup>50</sup> The first two plays by Euripides present common plot elements: being stranded in a barbarian country, seeking refuge in a sacred space, reunion with a loved one, a *mechane* providing escape by sea. There is also a clear correspondence of *dramatis personae*:<sup>51</sup>

<i>Charition</i>	<i>Iphigenia in Tauris</i>	<i>Helen</i>
Charition	Iphigenia	Helen
King of the Barbarians	Thoas	Theoclymenus
Charition’s brother	Orestes	Menelaus
Slave	Pylades / Chorus	Theonoe

As regards *Charition* and *Iphigenia* in particular, the two plays are

48. See also 61. 71. 72. 73. 74. 76. 77. 78. 81. 82. 87.

49. See also 39. 57. 93. 130.

50. Crusius (1904) 357.

51. See mainly Santelia (1991) 16.

linked by at least two thematic details: in both cases the heroine is a priestess at the temple of a goddess, while in both *Iphigenia* (ll. 1398-1402) and *Charition* (l. 106) she invokes the goddess's aid in her escape.<sup>52</sup> This relationship with *Iphigenia* has been proved, with reference to verbal and thematic parallels, by Winter in his dissertation.<sup>53</sup> There is no doubt that *Charition* follows, at least as far as the structure of the plot is concerned, the first of Wiemken's "Motivkomplexe", that of *Iphigenia in Tauris*.<sup>54</sup> If this is the case, however, we are not missing just the exposition of the situation that must have appeared at the beginning of the play, as Wiemken argues<sup>55</sup>, but a much larger section. It seems unlikely that a recognition scene between Charition and her brother would be absent; it is a vital element in *Iphigenia* and is mentioned several times by Aristotle in the *Poetics* (14.1454<sup>a</sup>7, 16.1455<sup>a</sup>16-18, 17.1455<sup>b</sup>3-12) as an example of a successful recognition, as is the *mechane* for the escape from the country.<sup>56</sup> It is also unlikely that Charition's brother would not

52. The fact that Charition is a priestess is inferred by her invocations (88 θεὰ Σελήνη, 106 σῶζε τὴν σὴν πρό[σπολον) and her arguing against removing the offerings from the temple (44-47). Her argument is even written in verse, as noted by W. Crönert, *RhM* 64 (1909) 446. Reich (1925), who calls *Charition* a "Textbuch der ersten antiken Oper" (86) and considers that it was written by the mimographer Philistion, compares the work, as does Hall (2010) 399, to Mozart's comic opera (more precisely: *Singspiel*) *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782). The comparison is apposite but there is a basic difference preventing a recognition scene in Mozart's case: the couple are lovers, and the hero (Belmonte) sails to the shores where his betrothed (Konstanze) is held captive, having been informed of her whereabouts by letter.

53. Winter (1906) 24-28; see also Santelia (1991) 12-34; Hall (2010) 397ff. On the relationship with Helen and the Cyclops in particular, see Knoke's reservations, (1908) 12-15. It may be worth noting here that Rinthon, the author of *phlyakes*, had written a work entitled *Ἰφιγένεια ἂ ἐν Ταύροις* (Kaibel, *CGF* p. 186).

54. The second "Motivkomplex" is the intermedio with the inebriation of the barbarians, referring to the Polyphemus narrative as told in *Cyclops*; see Wiemken (1972) 79-80, who notes, in my view correctly, that the intermedio did not arise out of organic necessity at the development of the plot, but from the desire to enhance the work with a rich and impressive scene. Trenkner (1958) 53 notes that getting one's enemy drunk is one of the commonest motifs in "popular tales of cunning".

55. Wiemken (1972) 60: "das Fehlen der Exposition".

56. On illustrations of the recognition scene, see L. Kahil and Linant de Bellefonds, "Iphigenia", *LIMC* V (1990) 706-29, particularly nos. 14. 18. 22. 25; also O.

have appeared earlier along with the *stupidus* (~ Pylades) and the king (~ Thoas). If we count these episodes as part of the play, *Charition* must have been more extensive than the section known to us — which, in the final analysis, seems reasonable for an (expensive) theatrical production featuring multiple actors, a Chorus and music. (For the same reason, the hypothesis<sup>57</sup> that all these events were related in a Prologue is unconvincing.) Such a play in its complete form would have presented a very different picture to the one it does now, certainly very far from a “sketch” serving only for improvisation.

The second version of (part of) the mime also supports the view that this was not a mere “sketch” but a proper dramatic work. Wiemken believes that this version arose from the staging demands of a second performance, when the actor playing Charition’s brother was unable to take part, and his role was divided between ζ and Β.<sup>58</sup> This explanation, though, is unsatisfactory, as the second version covers only a few lines (30-57) of the first version, while Charition’s brother also (Γ) appears in the continuation of the first version (ll. 60, 69, 93-4, 97, 99-100, 104). How may we overcome this difficulty? Should we take it that the papyrus continued with the rest of the second version? This possibility seems by no means improbable, but even so Wiemken’s explanation remains deficient. Who would rewrite a whole mime script just for a single performance? And, even more importantly, it is unlikely that Charition’s brother could be missing from the play (just imagine *Iphigenia in Tauris* without Orestes). Therefore, an explanation based on practical reasons related to the performance must be excluded.

A careful examination of the differences between the two versions shows that they have not been made with practicality in mind. For one thing, where there is a correspondence between them, the text of the second version is either slightly longer (30 ~ 107-8, 33 ~ 115-6) or more lively (38 ~ 209, 39 ~ 130-31).<sup>59</sup> Charition’s speech has also become more dignified (109 *μεγάλοι οἱ θεοί*, 111 *παῦσαι, ἄνθρωπε*, 145-46 *οὐδ’*

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Taplin, *Pots and Plays: Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-Painting of the Fourth Century B.C.*, Los Angeles 2007, 149-56.

57. Knoke (1908) 16.

58. Wiemken (1972) 76-79.

59. Cf. Knoke (1908) 29.

ἐκείνων χρείαν ἔχω, μόν[ον δὲ τὸ πρόσω]πον τοῦ πατρὸς θεάσασθ[θαι]. Finally, in the second version a sentence has been improved from a linguistic point of view (46-47 πῶς γὰρ ὑπακούουσι ταῖς ἐνχαῖς πονηρία τὸν ἔλεον μέλλοντες παρ[ασπᾶ]σθαι; ~ 141-42 πῶς γὰρ ὑπακούουσιν ἀ[τῶν πονηρία τὸν ἔλεον ἐπισπωμ[ένων];), the humbler verb μαλῶσαι (43) has been replaced by βαστάζειν (137), while Charition's words about giving wine to the Indians (51-54) have been omitted, presumably as unnecessary (51-54).<sup>60</sup> Someone who is trying to solve a practical problem, such as that proposed by Wiemken, does not make changes of this kind. The second version demonstrates an overriding concern for the dramatic text itself, which does not fit the view of a simple "sketch".<sup>61</sup> I do not think anyone can say exactly why it was written: as the second version is not preserved in full we do not know what changes it made to the original, or even how long it was.

Let us move on now to the second mime, the *Moicheutria*. In this case, too, thematic similarities and common motifs with works of literature have been noted. The obvious similarity to Herodas' Mimiamb 5 ("Ζηλότυπος") was signaled by the first editors: the dominant figure of the lady of a house (Mistress ~ Bitinna) who desires a slave (Aesopus ~ Gastron), who, however, is in love with another woman (Apollonia ~ Amphytaia).<sup>62</sup> Similarities to the *Vita Aesopi*, Apuleius (*Metamorphoses* X 2-12), Xenophon of Ephesus (*Ephesiaca* III 12 – IV 1-4) and Heliodorus (*Aethiopica* I 7-8)<sup>63</sup> have also been pointed out. The identification

60. *Op. cit.*

61. This does not alter the fact that the text is seen as something receptive to interventions and alterations. Such treatment of the mime script is strongly reminiscent of the copyists of medieval vernacular texts, who freely added to, abbreviated and redacted them; cf. R. Beaton, *The Medieval Greek Romance*, Cambridge 1989, 183.

62. See mainly Andreassi (2001a) 32-33 and, in more detail, Andreassi (2002) 33-36; see also Gómez (1990-1992). On adultery as a theme in mime generally, see Reich (1903a) 89-90; Nicoll (1931) 119-20; Theocharidis (1940) 83-87; R.W. Reynolds, "The Adultery Mime", *CQ* 40 (1946) 77-84; J.C. McKeown, "Augustan Elegy and Mime", *PCPhS* 205 (1979) 71-6; Kehoe (1969) 97-119; P. H. Kehoe, "The Adultery Mime Reconsidered", in D. F. Bright – E. S. Ramage (ed.), *Classical Texts and their Tradition*, Chico, California 1984, 89-106; Konstantakos (2006) 591-98.

63. On the relationship to the *Vita Aesopi*, see Andreassi (2001b) and Andreassi (2002) 36-39; also Gómez (1990-1992). On the relationship to Apuleius, see Andreassi

of the common points, however, while showing that the *Moicheutria* forms part of a mime tradition and that specific themes and motifs were generally widespread in both mime and the novel, does not prove anything about the character or extent of the text.<sup>64</sup>

An important fact, however, to the present issue, is that the text is an actor's 'part'. It would be reasonable to suppose — bearing in mind parallels from other periods, such as the Elizabethan era — that the actor's 'part' originates from a fuller text, although an objection would be that we have no evidence that the same practices held true during the period in question as in other times and places. We must therefore examine the text itself in order to ascertain, from a dramaturgical point of view, whether this is a dramatic work or simply a starting-point for improvisation, and whether, in the latter case, it could form the basis for a performance in its own right.

I will start with a direct answer to the second question: the text as it stands could, in my view, neither form the basis for improvisation nor be of practical use, because it presupposes a relatively elaborate plot, for the staging or, at least, the comprehension of which, the text itself is of no real help (as would be the case, for instance, with a *Commedia dell'arte canevaccio*).

In order to make my argument clearer, I will list all the plot elements that are required for the performance of the play but are missing from the preserved text. (i) Between the Mistress's first and second entrances, the slaves (perhaps led by the slave Spinther) would have had to agree not to carry out her order. They would also have had to report to the Mistress that the condemned pair (Aesopus and Apollonia) had escaped through divine intervention. The slaves' plot (also a common motif in comedy) could hardly be missing from the play. (ii) Between the Mis-

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(1997); on the relationship to Xenophon of Ephesus and Heliodorus, see Andreassi (2002) 39-44.

64. As regards the motif of the lewd woman, we must now also take into account a recently published text of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, preserved in Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 4726 (D. Obbink, "4762: Narrative Romance", *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 70, 2006, 22-99). On the type and possible author of the papyric text, see R. May, "An Ass from Oxyrhynchus: P.Oxy. LXX 4762, Loukios of Patrae and the Milesian Tales", *Ancient Narrative* 8 (2010) 59-84.

tress's second and third entrances, the slaves would have had to arrest Aesopus. Spinther would have given him a drug to make him appear to be dead. (Apparent death is also a well-known motif in the novel). (iii) Between the third and fourth entrances there was probably a dialogue between Spinther and the other slaves, commenting on the preceding events. (iv) Between the Mistress's fourth and fifth entrances Spinther must have appeared. He would have been aware of the plan, perhaps having eavesdropped on the previous scene. The slaves would have brought on stage the unconscious Apollonia, lain her down and covered her. (v) Between the Mistress's fifth and sixth entrances, Spinther would have enlightened the Parasite on her criminal plan and given him the appropriate directions.

All the above are presupposed in what the Mistress says and does, but the audience would have had to see these actions on stage, or the play would have been incomprehensible. It is also obvious that the actions described concern only the surviving part of the Mistress's role, not the missing section (approximately 44 lines of the first column and perhaps more text beforehand). The plot of this brief play was by no means simple, relatively speaking; it contained a total of five intrigues (the arrangement of Aesopus' and Apollonia's escape, the deception of the Mistress with the "corpse" first of Aesopus, then of Apollonia and then of the old Master, and finally the deception of the Mistress by the Parasite, who pretends to drink the poison). Can one truly suppose that for such a play there was no text other than the existing one, and that the actors would have been informed verbally by someone else of the missing plot elements each time, or even have improvised them? I believe that this possibility must be excluded.

However, it is not only the absence of key elements pertaining to this rather elaborate plot that pleads in favour of the existence of a proper dramatic text. The prejudices affecting the study of anonymous mimes have prevented scholars from noticing the fairly elaborate character of the *Moicheutria* and the existence of dramaturgy in the work. Its incontestable affinities with, especially, Herodas' *Mimiamb* 5 has been mentioned above. There is no doubt that the jealous Mistress of the *Moicheutria*, with her lewdness and vindictive cruelty, has many points in common with the Bitinna of Herodas, whose work may have been the main source for the mime. Nevertheless, there are significant differences

between the two texts: Bitinna already had an affair with the slave Gastron, and there is no mention anywhere in the Mimiamb of either a husband or plotting. The Mimiamb focuses solely on jealousy (*ζηλοτυπία*).<sup>65</sup> On the contrary, the Mistress's sexual desire for the slave in the *Moicheutria* and her subsequent fury cover only part of the plot of the play. The alterations to the original subject permit further intrigues and a second *Motivkomplex*, that of the poisoning (*φαρμακεία*) of husband and slaves.<sup>66</sup> But these two "Motivkomplexe" have not just been amalgamated for the sake of show or variety; they are not, in other words, the equivalent of the *contaminatio* found in works of Latin adaptations of New Comedy.<sup>67</sup> The elaborate plot, with themes and motifs drawn from various sources (Herodas, *Vita Aesopi*, Apuleius, Xenophon of Ephesus, Heliodorus) is causally structured around a single person, the Mistress, who, unlike the other dramatis personae, is neither a stock character nor merely fulfilling a function, but has dramatic substance: she has strong desires, she has emotions (jealousy and rage over Aesopus, fear of the consequences of her actions), she is superstitious (she prays to the gods), and she has plans (to murder her husband and the rest of the household, sell the property and leave). Her *ethos* and actions ultimately drive the plot and hold the play together. Furthermore, her character and behaviour carry ideological undertones (the love of the slave Aesopus for the slave Apollonia is contrasted with the Mistress's conventional marriage to her aged husband; the loyalty of the slaves to the Master of the house is contrasted with the unfaithfulness of his wife). Thus, this is neither a schematic plot nor a mechanical accumulation of themes and scenes, but a work of dramatic character. It is difficult to imagine that this dramaturgically elaborate work was limited to a single actor's 'part', and that it left dramatically and ideologically interesting elements (e.g. Aesopus' answers to the Mistress) to be improvised on the spot.

65. On the theme of jealousy, see E. Fantham, "ΖΗΛΟΥΤΥΠΙΑ: A Brief Excursion into Sex, Violence, and Literary History", *Phoenix* 40 (1987) 45-57.

66. In this respect I believe that neither Crusius's title *Moicheutria* nor Wiemken's *Giftmischermimus* is accurate.

67. On *contaminatio* in the comedies of Plautus and Terence, see K. Gaiser, "Zur Eigenart der römischen Komödie", *ANRW* 1.2 (1972) 1058-66 with further bibliography.

Apart from these observations on the plot and dramaturgy of the mime, we must also bear in mind a number of details of the surviving text which do not fit in with the supposed complete lack of a script for the other roles. I am not referring so much to particular stylistic elements of the Mistress's speech, such as alliteration (18 *πώλω Ἀπολλωνία*), asyndeton (32 *ἔλκετε, σύρετε, ἀπάγετε*), the combination of cumulative adjectives with *ὁμοιοκάταρκτον* (81 *ἄκληρε, ἀ[λγ]εινέ, ἀναφρόδιτε*), escalation (18-19), the poetic vocabulary of certain phrases (e.g. 16 *μὴ τῆς ἀλλήλων ὄψεως [πλ]ησθέντες μεθ' ἡδονῆ[ς] ἀποθάνωσι*) or the high (almost paratragic) style of the two laments (49-53, 83-84). Nor am I referring so much to secondary verbal elements, such as the Mistress's exclamation *ἰδοῦ* (11) when she beats Aesopus, or the Parasite's answer *καὶ καλῶς λέγεις* (73), which would be hard to justify in the "improvisatory core" of a play. All of these might be somehow explained away. I am referring, above all, to the existence of particular questions in the text which presuppose that very specific words or actions have preceded them. The first case is found in the scene where the Mistress asks Malacus if the poison and the meal are ready (58-60): *τ[ὸ] φάρμακον ἔχεις συγκεκραμένον; / καὶ τὸ ἄριστον ἔ[τοι]μόν ἐστι; / τὸ ποῖον; / Μάλακε*. The question: *τὸ ποῖον;* is enigmatic.<sup>68</sup> The idea that the mimographer provided the actors each time with the required information does not seem convincing to me at all, for the simple reason that it would have been completely impractical to do so in a troupe which must have had many plays in its repertoire. Hence, the missing part of the dialogue must have been written down somewhere. The second case is in the scene where the Mistress asks the Parasite for information regarding the old man's murder, and then about exactly how it happened (66-67): *παράσιτε, τί γέγονεν; / αἶ πῶς; / μάλιστα*. The second question in this passage also implies that something very specific has been said, with no leeway for improvisation. Also, the Mistress's question before the final scene, *τί οἶν θέλεις;* (70), which is left unanswered, remains also inexplicable as it stands.

Finally, let us add to the preceding observations the fact that — as we have seen above — the Mistress also participates in the final scene,

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68. Regarding the interpretation of the passage, see Winter (1906) 61; Sudhaus (1906) 260; Wiemken (1972) 100; Andreassi (2001) 145-46.

making this a typical actor's 'part'. The other persons of the final scene must have taken part as well (with scenic action but also, inevitably, with words) in other parts of the play, but only the sections of interest to the Mistress's role are extant. There is only one convincing explanation for the text as it stands: someone copied the Mistress's role script from a fuller work, as is generally the case with technical texts of this kind in theatrical practice.<sup>69</sup>

Let us sum up the basic points of what we have said concerning the two texts. Each had a completely distinct technical character (prompter's/stage director's text — actor's 'part'), although both were probably used by the same troupe; the text is carefully worded in both cases; in *Charition* the text, a mixture of prose and verse in cultivated language, has been copied — as evidenced by the corruptelae in the verse sections — from an older original; although both texts were intended to be memorised, at certain points there are (at first sight) inexplicable omissions; in at least one case (the *Moicheutria*) the text does not even include many elements of the particularly complex plot. Combining all these points we are led to the reasonable conclusion that, for both *Charition* and the *Moicheutria*, the existence of a dramatic text must be considered more than probable. If this is the case, it is not hard to imagine both the stages of composition and the reasons for the existence of the papyric texts. A dramatic text, *Charition*, was first copied on the recto (the "good" side) of the papyrus, although we must suppose that a sizeable part of the text has not survived.<sup>70</sup> This text was used by the "stage director" (i.e. the troupe leader) or the prompter for the staging of the performance, which involved a large number of actors and a Cho-

69. Of interest relative to the proposed interpretation is a sherd (O.Florida Inv. 21), which presents a person's words, has a sexual content and, according to R.S. Bagnall and R. Cribiore, "O.Florida inv. 21: An Amorous Triangle", *CE* 85 (2010) 223, perhaps "derives from a personal copy of a passage in a mime to be used by a performer", i.e. was used as a *memorandum*.

70. It may have been a single sheet (commonly used for technical texts), which would explain the phrase written upside-down (τὸ εἶσω ἢ ὠς μεν[ ] ) on the recto: the author turned over the papyrus not horizontally (from right to left or vice versa) but vertically, so as to see the recto text exactly at the point corresponding to the new working of the verso. This meant that he would have seen the recto text upside-down.

rus.<sup>71</sup> On the verso (or “rough” side) of the papyrus, at precisely the point corresponding to the front side of the text, another hand copied, some time later, the polished version of part of *Charition*, of which we must equally suppose that a portion is missing.<sup>72</sup> Later, the actor’s part of a dramaturgically elaborate mime, the *Moicheutria*, was added to the verso.

### III. MIME AND DRAMATIC TEXT

The conclusion that dramatic texts existed in the case of *Charition* and the *Moicheutria* is, in my opinion, of considerable significance, given that these are the only extensive mime texts that have survived, and that is on these that the entire theory of the improvisatory character of dramatic mime, chiefly developed by Wiemken, rests. This view of mime must now be revised. Mime, at least that of the Roman Empire, was not merely an often impressive spectacle with music and dancing by large troupes; although improvisation would probably have been far more extensive than in other forms of theatre, mime performances were based on sometimes elaborate dramatic texts (the *Moicheutria* is a convincing example) and the use of technical texts. This revised view is consistent with other evidence of contemporary mime. Of the fragments of mimes of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD, the verse mimes (P.Oxy. 219; P.Lond. 51<sup>v</sup>; P.Ryl. 15<sup>v</sup>) were evidently written down in full, even though no complete texts or even large extracts have come down to us.<sup>73</sup> But even as regards the prose mimes, which are of more interest to us here, I believe that there are some indications in this direction. I will mention only one, the most significant: P.Lit.Lond. 97 (= P.Lond. Inv. 1984) pre-

71. It is hard to say whether the musical and the other symbols appeared in the original text.

72. The fact that the second version of *Charition* was written first, emerges, I believe, from the correspondence to the recto, and from the hand, which is more careful than that of the *Moicheutria*. We cannot exclude the possibility that the texts were written in the reverse order.

73. On the character of the prose text of P.Giss. 3, see P. Kuhlmann, *Die Giessener literarischen Papyri und die Caracalla-Erlasse*, Giessen 1994, 100ff. The (later) prose mime of P.Col. Inv. 546A probably contained a fuller text, closer to the performance; see Elliott (2003) 63.

serves a fragment from a mime whose subject was an arbitration scene and whose dialogue included the smallest details of the characters' lines. Most impressively, however, on the verso are written in red ink the following words: ἐκ βιβλιοθή(κης) Πρασί(ου) | Ηρακλείδης ἀ[πέγραψεν. Here we have irrefutable proof that the mime in question was housed in a library and was therefore used for reading.

The conclusion regarding the existence of dramatic mime during the Roman Empire is consistent with Plutarch's well-known reference in the *Symposiaca* (VII 8.712A), cited at the beginning of this paper. However, this change in the character of mime must have had its origins in much earlier times. From 173 BC (or a little later), when mime was added to the official programme of the Floralia, we must consider that performances were no longer dependent solely on improvisation, but was based on some kind of fixed format, perhaps textual (like comedy), since every play would have had to be submitted to the *aediles* in order to obtain funding.<sup>74</sup> Later, during the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC, the most famous Latin mimographers, Laberius and Publilius (who, we may note in passing, was from Antioch), composed what were presumably entire mime texts in carefully crafted language (despite their neologisms, popular expressions and ribald elements). In some cases, these texts may have been influenced by New Comedy and the *fabula palliata* (especially by Plautus).<sup>75</sup> Philistion, too, who probably lived towards the end of the century and was from Asia Minor, must have written mimes that circulated in textual form, otherwise it is not easy to explain the frequent references to him and the survival of his reputation as a mimographer into later periods.<sup>76</sup>

74. See Fantham (1989) 155. Although there is insufficient information on similar cases in earlier periods, at the Dionysia and Lenaia of classical Athens poets who were to take part in the contests were probably chosen on the basis of representative samples read out to the archon in charge, cf. Plato, *Laws* VII 817D. On the year of introduction to the Floralia, cf. Ovid *Fasti* V 327-28; Pliny *NH* 184.

75. On the language and “multi-layered and wide-ranging” style of Laberius, and the influence of Plautus and the *fabula palliata*, see Panayotakis (2010) 57ff., especially 59-60.

76. On Philistion, see E. Wüst, “Philistion [3]”, *RE* XIV (1938) 2402-2405; Kehoe (1969) 146-59; see also Ch. Garton, “A Revised Register of Augustan Actors”, *ANRW* 30.1 (1981) 604. Reich's extensive presentation (1903a) 417-615 has justly been subjected to strong criticism as the product of “combinatory imagination”.

What applied to the West also applied, of course, to the East, particularly Egypt, since the mime in Rome was always strongly influenced by Greece and the East.<sup>77</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that the mime was subject to changes between the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC and the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD. It is probable that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC (or later in several cases) the performances had fewer actors, were based more on improvisation and were largely dominated by the archimimus or archimima. From the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC, however, the situation must have changed: theatre performances included *hypotheses*, as described by Plutarch. There is also another detail which is, I believe, hardly coincidental: in the same century that Laberius, Publilius and Philistion were writing, the terms *μιμογράφος* in Greek and *mimographus* in Latin appear also for the first time.<sup>78</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that the mimographers' texts were essentially dramatic texts, which actors memorised in rehearsals. When, several centuries later, Choricus in his famous rhetorical defence of mimes writes that the mime actor must have a naturally good memory, in order not to forget what he has learnt during the preparation of the performance (§125: οὐ γὰρ ἐπιλήσιμονα δεῖ πεφυκέναι, μή τι τῶν ἔξω μελετηθέντων ἔνδον αὐτὸν διαφύγοι), he confirms that in his time, too, mime actors rehearsed using presumably lengthy texts, not particularly easy to learn off by heart.<sup>79</sup>

77. This is evidenced by the terminology of mime itself and by the large number of mime actors from the East; it is also implied by specific testimonies. Cicero, in his over-the-top attack on the Alexandrians in his *Pro C. Rabirio Postumo* 35, writes, among other things, that “all mimic plots originate with them”: *audiebamus Alexandream, nunc cognoscimus. illinc omnes praestigiae, illinc, inquam, omnes fallaciae, omnia denique ab eis mimorum argumenta nata sunt*. Suetonius (*Iul.* 39; *Aug.* 43) reports that Julius Caesar and Augustus organised festival games (*ludi*), at which the actors “spoke all languages” (meaning, although this is not stated, Greek first and foremost). See Maxwell (1993) 59-62, who, having noted all the methodological problems and the impossibility of extracting statistical conclusions from the inscriptions and papyri he examines, reaches the following conclusion (62): “Nevertheless, I believe this documentary evidence does show that the movement of mimes was generally from east to west and not vice versa, and is thus an important complement to the literary sources, which imply the same thing.”

78. On the term in Greek, see Philodemus, *On Poems* I col. IX 21 Janko; Galen *AA* II p. 631 Kühn; cf. LSJ s.v. For the Latin, see Pliny *NH* 1, 9, Suetonius *De gramm.* 18, 1; cf. *TLL* VIII 988, 23ff.; cf. Maxwell (1993) 38-40.

79. Cf. Pasquato (1976) 117-18.

Based on Plutarch's distinction, we can assume that *Charition* and the *Moicheutria* are examples (the only ones known to survive) of mimic *hypotheses*. As, however, the two mimes are plays written for theatre performance, I think it is important to take into account both the space and the audience for which they were intended. We can draw relatively safe conclusions about these factors. Firstly, performances with such a large number of players and such action as that of *Charition* must have been played in regular theatres rather than private spaces.<sup>80</sup> This hypothesis is based on evidence from inscriptions, but it is also supported, in my opinion, by the relief scene of a mime (one can even tell it is from an adultery play) preserved in the theatre of Sabratha in Northern Libya (late 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD) [see *Fig. V*].<sup>81</sup> And since our papyrus was found in Oxyrhynchus, it is more or less certain that both plays were performed in the theatre of Oxyrhynchus (even if they were not written in Oxyrhynchus or were not originally intended for that theatre). To give a better picture of the staging conditions and, potentially, the character of the plays, I may just mention that the city theatre had a capacity of 11,200 seats (according to the calculations of the excavator, Flinders Petrie) and its dimensions were by no means negligible: the cavea was 121.79 metres in diameter — roughly equal to the Theatre of Epidaurus — while the stage was 61.09 metres long and 6.50 metres wide [*Fig. VI*].<sup>82</sup> It is easy to understand that mime performances staged in such

80. A point also made by Wiemken (1979) 430.

81. For epigraphical evidence (mainly funerary epigrams) of mime actors who played many times *ἐν θεάτροις* or *ἠν θημέλαις*, see Maxwell (1993) no. 28 (Chrysopolis: τὸ πάλαι πολλοῖς θεάτροις ἀρέσασαν), 31 (Gemellus: ὁ πολλοῖς θεάτροις πολλὰ λαλήσας), 37, 39. On the relief depiction at Sabratha, see G. Caputo, *Il teatro di Sabratha e l'architettura teatrale africana*, Rome 1959, 18-19 and Bieber (1961) 237-38. Cf. also the Pompeii fresco depicting the *scaenae frons* of a theatre and actors, probably playing mime: Bieber (1920) 78-81, fig. 82, and Bieber (1961) 232, fig. 775.

82. See W.M. Flinders Petrie, *Tombs of the Courtiers and Oxyrhynchos*, London 1925, 14; also Krüger (1990) 125-30; F. Sear, *Roman Theatres. An Architectural Study*, Oxford 2006, 300-301. Of interest with regard to the mimes of *P.Oxy.* 413 is Flinders Petrie's reference to a single door on the theatre stage: "presumably there was a doorway in the middle, but certainly there were not two doors at the sides". In the *Moicheutria* (45) the Mistress urges Malacus to go to the "wide door" (*πορευθεῖς τῇ πλατεῖα θύρα*) to call his aged Master. Sudhaus (1906) 258 n. 2 believes that the

theatres would not have had much in common with mime performances on rough wooden stages in squares or private houses. The breadth and type of improvisation in such large theatres and in front of such a large, urban and mostly literate audience (I will refer to the audience of mime below) must have possessed a different character.

I believe that a basic conclusion can be drawn from all the above, and mainly from the texts themselves: the mime theatre of the Imperial Age that was intended for the stage was no longer essentially improvisatory, but based on dramatic texts (such as those from which *Charition* and the *Moicheutria* are derived) and, hence, it did not, in this respect, differ greatly from performances of comedy. Thus Wiemken's basic thesis on "improvisatory theatre" — the dominant thesis, and one that is reproduced without questioning in relevant discussions of mime<sup>83</sup> — must be revised. Several issues remain to be re-examined. I believe that two of these are of particular interest: a more precise exploration of the character of mimic *hypotheses* as a theatrical form, and of their relationship to comedy.

#### IV. MIMIC DRAMA

Concerning the first issue, that is mimic *hypotheses* as a form of drama, we first need to clarify — through examination of the texts themselves and comparison of them with similar forms in other periods — the fundamental characteristics of these plays and, as far as possible, of their performances. For the moment I will restrict myself to a few general remarks, omitting features which I have already mentioned in the discussion of the two mimes in question.

(1) Mimic *hypotheses* were primarily plot-based. The recurrent motif of intrigue is linked precisely to this special importance of plot and scenic action. The emphasis on these two elements is common to *hypotheses* and the ancient novel.

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*siparium* indicated the "narrow door" (στενή θύρα) in front of which the play was performed. Might the πλατεῖα θύρα have been this particular theatre door? Cf. the two doorways in the Sabratha theatre (Fig. VI).

83. See for instance W.D. Furley, "Mimos", *Der Neue Pauly* 8 (2000) 203.

(2) The basic plot structure was the conflict between two sides (individuals or groups). The importance of conflict as a structural pattern also partly explains the frequent appearance of bipolar relations (Greeks — Indians, Mistress — slaves, etc.).

(3) A typical feature of *hypotheses* and mime in general was the exploitation of themes and motifs linked to bodily functions: sex (not only at the level of ribaldry), food and drink.

(4) The authors of mimic *hypotheses* used ready-made (i.e. well-known from elsewhere) or widespread dramatic situations (e.g. the theme of adultery or tragedy plots) and stock characters (the most characteristic case is the Fool), but we may also suppose that there were dialogues or songs (as is often the case in similar forms of theatre).

(5) Repetition plays an important role in the creation of comic effect (e.g. the attacks of the natives and corresponding use of *crepitus ventris* in *Charition*, various plots in the *Moicheutria*).

(6) While the unity of place is preserved, the use of dramatic time is completely unconventional: events take place so quickly that any realistic sense of time is essentially non-existent. However, it is precisely this frenzied action (particularly noticeable in the *Moicheutria*), allowing the spectator no time to think, that contributes to the comic effect.

(7) From the texts themselves it emerges that gestures and body language in general played an important part in the performance (in the case of the *Moicheutria*, for instance, parallel scenic action was expressed chiefly through the scenic interpretation of the slaves). However, the extent and character of the improvisation, and the possible existence of some interaction with the audience (with the concomitant suspension of the theatrical illusion), are subjects we can only talk about in very general terms and with much guesswork.

I now proceed to the issue of the relationship of mimic *hypotheses* to comedy. There is an obvious similarity of genre between mime and comedy — they are both comic forms of theatre — and this is sometimes characterized by thematic similarity.<sup>84</sup> But there are also vital differences

84. Mime was already linked to comedy in antiquity: Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* XI 6, 2 (μετὰ ταῦτα τίς ἢ μέση κωμωδία καὶ λοιπὸν ἢ νέα πρὸς τί ποτε παρλείπηται, ἢ κατ' ὀλίγον ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκ μιμήσεως φιλοτεχνίαν [i.e. mime] ὑπερρῶν, ἐπίστησον); Euanthius, *De comoed. exc.* 6, 1 Wessner; *Choricus Apol.* 44· cf. *Suda* σ 894 and φ 364. See also

between the two types, which are not limited to dramatic form (e.g. use of prose), or simply to features of the performance (appearance of actors on stage without masks), or to the strong sexual or farcical element (the former is probably a traditional element in both mime and Old Comedy). There is, in my opinion, a deeper difference which is connected to the *function* of mimic *hypotheses* in the Roman Empire: they are now a theatre form of ‘popular’ culture addressed to a mass, but at the same time disparate audience.<sup>85</sup> The use of themes and motifs from tragedy is only superficially parodic, since there is no interest in a “dialogue” with specific plays, but only in parasitic exploitation of known and successful stories and themes;<sup>86</sup> the many “secondary plots” (especially evident in the *Moicheutria*) do not come from a pursuit of elaborate dramaturgy (as in Menander’s comedies, for instance), but serve the constant onstage action, as in French vaudeville; the sketchily-drawn characters, the ideological stereotypes, the use of “realistic” language in contexts that are anything but everyday (India in *Charition*, a rich villa in the *Moicheutria*), even the music, which neither serves a narrative purpose nor attempts to rouse the emotions, but merely stresses points in the scenic action — all these show that we are dealing with easily digestible products intended for mass consumption.

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Kehoe (1969) 6-8.

85. I use the term “popular culture” in the general sense given by P. Burke in the Prologue of *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, New York 1978: “the non-elite culture”.
86. When Swiderek (1954) 70 calls *Charition* a “travesti” and Hall considers it a “parodic adaptation” or “burlesque of canonical tragedy” ([2010] 406, cf. 409), they are using terms that may be misleading as to the character of such works of ‘popular’ theatre. On the other hand, Trenkner (1958) 53 is wrong to argue that all similarities of plot are due to common, widespread motifs of folktale and the novel. Certainly, *Charition* (which mixes, as noted above, themes from several plays) exploits elements from tragedies, but this is not done with the aim of ridiculing the original, as in parody. The comic element does not parody the main characters, plot or spoken parts of Euripides’ plays, but appears in places where a comic tone is also present in Euripides (e.g. the grotesque depiction of Thoas and the barbarians), or is linked to the motif — basic in the production of a comic effect — of intoxication by wine, which comes from the satyr play *Cyclops*. In *Charition*, it is not a case of chance elements from these plays being amalgamated. Andreassi (2002) 45 is probably right to speak, with regard to the two Oxyrhynchus mimes, of a “processo osmotico”.

The uniqueness of this particular version of mime can be better understood if one considers the audience of these theatrical performances. As we have seen, the “costly” *hypotheses* (according to Plutarch) could only have been played in theatres (or similar public spaces) in towns, in front of a Greek-speaking audience. In any case, mime actors, like *homeristai*, are mainly found in cities, as oppose to dancers and musicians, who are also found in villages.<sup>87</sup> Thus, the audience of mimic dramas would have been an urban public. In Egypt, city-dwellers were a mixture of ethnicities. There was, of course, the vast majority of indigenous inhabitants, but the Greek element was culturally dominant from the Hellenistic period onwards, forming an elite organised around the *gymnasium*.<sup>88</sup> Then there were the Romans, who occupied the highest administrative positions, as well as other ethnicities. In the *Ἰξυρόγγων πόλιν*, for instance, one of the largest cities in Egypt (with a population perhaps over 30,000)<sup>89</sup>, we know that there were Jewish, Cretan and Lycian districts (*amphoda*).<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, the audience would have displayed wide social and professional stratification (merchants, mercenaries, senior and junior administrative officials, various categories of workers). In Alexandria, the capital (a true metropolis of approximately 500,000 inhabitants), which would certainly have influenced the

87. The mimes must have played in towns; this is due not only to their language but also to the high fees they demanded; see Lindsay (1963) 171.

88. With time, racial mixing and the political Hellenisation of many Egyptian urban dwellers had blurred the boundaries, but the basic distinction between Greeks and natives remained strong. A characteristic example is the phrase someone addresses to his brothers in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD (P.Oxy. 168): ἴσως με νομίζετε, ἀδελφοί, βάρβαρόν τινα ἢ Αἰγύπτιον ἀνάνθρωπον (i.e. “wild”). See H.I. Bell, “Hellenic Culture in Egypt”, *JEA* 8 (1922) 149. On Egyptian society in Roman times, see, in general, see A.K. Bowman, in *Cambridge Ancient History*, X, <sup>2</sup>1996, 693ff.

89. On the population of Oxyrhynchus, see I.F. Fichman, “Die Bevölkerung von Oxyrhynchus in byzantinischer Zeit”, *APF* 21 (1971) 114-16; Krüger (1990) 67-69; also R. Alston, *The City in Roman and Byzantine Egypt*, London/New York 2002, 331-33. On Oxyrhynchus in general, see also P. Parsons, *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish: Everyday Life in the Nile Valley, 400BC-350AD*, London 2007.

90. See H. Rink, *Strassen und Viertelnamen von Oxyrhynchus*, Giessen 1924; Krüger (1990) 84.

other cities in many ways,<sup>91</sup> the situation would have been even more complex. The culture of the large Egyptian cities during the Roman period would have been a melting-pot, meaning that the public flocking to the theatres during festivals would have been a disparate and not necessarily well-educated mass. We have no evidence about the audiences of mime performances, but we can guess from the language and contents of the plays that they were addressed, as already said, to a Greek or Hellenized urban public. In any case, it is important to note that this was a completely different public to that attending comedy performances in a Greek city in earlier times: the audience of mimic *hypotheses* did not possess the ethnic and ideological homogeneity of a Greek city-state.

There are two further elements to be taken into account if we are to understand the particular character of mimic *hypotheses*. First, as opposed to comedy, mime tradition did not possess a fixed structure and strict stock characters (its only basic ingredient was the “imitation of life”, even when its themes were not everyday *per se*). This means that adaptation and variety were much easier in mime than in comedy. Second, mime performances did not form a fixed part of the institutional framework of festivals organised and funded by the state (in this case the city).<sup>92</sup> In other words, these were commercial performances which had to meet the expectations and demands of the paying audience.<sup>93</sup> Even

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91. On Alexandria as a centre of education and its importance as a link with Rome, see E.G. Turner, “Oxyrhynchus and Rome”, *HSCP* 79 (1975) 9-10.

92. Prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD, cities such as Oxyrhynchus, even Alexandria, did not have the political organisation of Greek cities (see A.K. Bowman, in *Cambridge Ancient History*, X, <sup>2</sup>1996, 685). This does not mean that the rulers of these cities did not organise festivals on various occasions, which would have included mimic performances.

93. The organisation of mime actors into troupes would have been connected to the commercial character of mimic theatre and the economic conditions of its funding. On small troupes, see Maxwell (1993) 76-78. References to remuneration of mimes in Oxyrhynchus are found in P.Oxy. 519 fr. a (496 drachmas for a mime’s fee, 448 drachmas for an *δημοιστής*), and P.Oxy. 1050 col. 2; cf. P.Harr. 97<sup>v</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> c. AD, probably from Oxyrhynchus). In Oxyrhynchus, at least, there were several feast-days and therefore opportunities to attend performances: “No doubt these are the people who crowded the theatre to applaud the mime of Charition” (E.G. Turner, “Roman Oxyrhynchus”, *JEA* 38 [1952] 83).

supposing that mime troupes were sometimes paid to enrich a festival programme, this did not alter the basic character of the performances, and we need not think that anything other than entertainment was required.

Given the relative scarcity of evidence on the evolution of mime, I believe that comparison with similar popular and entertaining forms of theatre from other times and places would be both justified and useful at this juncture. It is particularly interesting to compare the Greek mime of the Imperial period with two forms that arose mainly in 19<sup>th</sup>-century France, melodrama and vaudeville, on which I will conclude my discussion, focusing, for obvious reasons, on (comic) vaudeville.<sup>94</sup> Both mime and vaudeville are connected to the rise of the bourgeoisie and the creation of an urban proletariat, and both are ‘popular’ forms of theatre, which featured variety and came a long way during the course of their history. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century vaudeville comprised a sketch accompanied by a few songs, but over time it acquired a more elaborate plot; in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century it revolved around a simple idea and preserved the songs, but now stretching over three or five acts; finally, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, vaudeville was transformed into a fast-paced situation comedy or farce without songs and began, thanks to this change, to draw material from the novel.<sup>95</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century at least, vaudeville subjects included very different categories (a variety similar, one might say, to that of the mime): oriental themes, opera parodies, treatment of mythological material, moral allegories, more realistic “poissard” concerning the lives of the Paris working class.<sup>96</sup> Like mime, vaudeville was actor-based and was often combined during the performances with similar forms such as operetta. Like mime, too, vaudeville, though very

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94. On vaudeville, see L. Matthes, *Vaudeville*, Heidelberg 1983; H. Gidel, *Le vaudeville*, Paris 1986; McCormick (1993) 113-33; D. Daphinoff, “Boulevardstück”, in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, I, Berlin<sup>3</sup> 1997, 246-49; J. Terni, “A Genre for Early Mass Culture: French Vaudeville and the City, 1830-1848”, *Theatre Journal* 58 (2006) 221-48. See also W. Koschmal’s splendid observations on vaudeville (starting from the Russian version of the form), in “Das Vaudeville als Mischgattung — zwischen Mimus und Wort”, *Zeitschrift für Slavistik* 42 (1997) 376-97.

95. It is often thought that mime preceded the novel. The case of vaudeville, however, shows that the opposite may be true.

96. See McCormick (1993) 115-16, who follows H. Gidel.

popular, was seen as entertainment rather than art (which explains the ephemeral existence of the thousands of works written). Coexistence with other forms of entertainment, thematic variety, different genres, an urban public and, finally, the gradual ‘literarisation’ of the form (Labiche, Feydeau), are features of vaudeville that might perhaps, through a more detailed comparative examination, contribute to a better understanding of the Greek mime of the Roman Empire.

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## APPENDIX

The final scene of the *Moicheutria* and the distribution of roles

Crusius (1914)

παράσιτε, τί γέγονεν; / αἶ πῶς; / μάλιστα. πάντων γάρ **ΑΓΩΝ**  
 ν[ῦ]ν ἐγκρατῆς γέγονα. / <ΣΠΙΝ.> ἄγωμεν, παράσιτε. / τί σὸν θέλεις;  
 <ΠΑΡ.> Σπινθήρ, ἐπίδοσ μοι φόνον ἱκανόν. / <ΣΠΙΝ.> παράσιτε, φοβο[ῦ]μαι  
 μὴ γελάσω. / καὶ καλῶς λέγεις. / λέξω τί με δεῖ λέγειν./  
 π[ά]τ[ε]ρ κόριε, τί με καταλείπεις; / ἀπολώλεκά μου τὴν  
 παρορησ(ἰαν). / τὴν δόξ(αν). / τὸ ἐλευθέριον φῶς. / σὺ μου ἦς ὁ κύριος. / τούτοι  
 μ[ῶ]νον ἀληθῆς οὐ λέγω. <ΜΑΛ.> ἄφες ἐγὼ αὐτὸν θρηγήσω./ οὐαί σοι, ταλαίπωρε, ἄκληρε,  
 ἄ[λ]γεινέ, ἀναφροδίτε· οὐαί σοι ≡ / <ΔΕΣΠ.> οὐαί μοι. / οἶδα γάρ σε ὄστις[ε]ρ εἶ, <sup>μισο<δ>μενε.</sup> Σπινθήρ,  
 ξύλα ἐπὶ τοῦτον. / οὔτος πάλιν τίς ἐστιν;/  
 <ΣΠΙΝ.> μένουσι σῶοι, δέσποτα.

Wiemken (1914)

<ΠΑΡ.> Σπινθήρ, ἐπίδοσ μοι φόνον ἱκανόν. / <ΣΠΙΝ.> παράσιτε, φοβο[ῦ]μαι  
 μὴ γελάσω. / καὶ καλῶς λέγεις. / λέξω τί με δεῖ λέγειν./  
 π[ά]τ[ε]ρ κόριε, τί με καταλείπεις; / ἀπολώλεκά μου τὴν  
 παρορησ(ἰαν). / τὴν δόξ(αν). / τὸ ἐλευθέριον φῶς. / σὺ μου ἦς ὁ κύριος. / τούτοι  
 μ[ῶ]νον ἀληθῆς οὐ λέγω. <ΜΑΛ.> ἄφες ἐγὼ αὐτὸν θρηγήσω./ οὐαί σοι, ταλαίπωρε, ἄκληρε,  
 ἄ[λ]γεινέ, ἀναφροδίτε· οὐαί σοι ≡ / <ΔΕΣΠ.> οὐαί μοι. / οἶδα γάρ σε ὄστις[ε]ρ εἶ, <sup>μισο<δ>μενε.</sup> Σπινθήρ,  
 ξύλα ἐπὶ τοῦτον. / οὔτος πάλιν τίς ἐστιν;/  
 <ΣΠΙΝ.> μένουσι σῶοι, δέσποτα.

Cunningham (1987)

<ΠΑΡ.> Σπινθήρ, ἐπίδοσ μοι φαῖον ἱμάτιον.  
 <ΣΠΙΝ.> παράσιτε, φοβο[ῦ]μαι μὴ γελάσω.  
 <ΠΑΡ.> καὶ καλῶς λέγεις.

- ⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ λέξω τί με δεῖ λέγειν.  
 ⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ πᾶ[τ]ερὸ κύριε, τί νι με καταλείπεις;  
 ⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ ἀπολώλεκά μου τὴν παρορησ(ίαν).  
 ⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ τὴν δόξ(αν).  
 ⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ τὸ ἐλευθέριον φῶς.  
 ⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ σύ μου ἦς ὁ κύριος.  
 ⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ τούτωι <sup>-μῶνον ἀληθῶς οὐ λέγω;</sup> ἄφες ἐγὼ αὐτὸν θρηγήσω.  
 ⟨ΔΕΣΠ.⟩ οὐαί σοι, ταλαίπωρε, ἄκλιρε, ἄ[λγ]εινέ, ἀναφρόδιτε· οὐαί σοι ≡ οὐαί μοι.  
 ⟨ΔΕΣΠ.⟩ οἶδα γάρ σε ὄστιςπ[ε]ρ εἶ, <sup>μισο<ε>μενε.</sup> Σπινθήρ, ξύλα ἐπὶ τοῦτον.  
 ⟨ΔΕΣΠ.⟩ οὗτος πάλιν τίς ἐστιν;  
 ⟨ΣΠΙΝ.⟩ μένουσι σῶοι, δέσποτα.

## Andreassi (2001)

- ⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ Σπινθήρ, ἐπίδοξ μοι φόνον ἱκανόν. /⟨ΣΠΙΝ.⟩ παράσιτε, φοβο[ῶ]μαι  
 μὴ γελάσω. /⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ καὶ καλῶς λέγεις. /⟨ΣΠΙΝ.⟩ λέξω τί με δεῖ λέγειν./  
 πᾶ[τ]ερὸ κύριε, τί νι με καταλείπεις; /⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ ἀπολώλεκά μου τὴν  
 παρορησ(ίαν). /  
 ⟨ΣΠΙΝ.⟩ τὴν δόξ(αν). /  
 ⟨ΠΑΡ.⟩ τὸ ἐλευθέριον φῶς. /  
 ⟨ΣΠΙΝ.⟩ σύ μου ἦς ὁ κύριος. /  
 ⟨ΜΑΛ.⟩ τούτωι  
 ἄφες ἐγὼ αὐτὸν θρηγήσω. <sup>μῶνον ἀληθῶς οὐ λέγω;</sup> / οὐαί σοι, ταλαίπωρε, ἄκλιρε,  
 ἄ[λγ]εινέ, ἀναφρόδιτε· οὐαί σοι ≡ /⟨ΔΕΣΠ.⟩ οὐαί μοι. / οἶδα γάρ σε ὄστιςπ[ε]ρ εἶ, <sup>μισο<ε>μενε.</sup> Σπινθήρ,  
 ξύλα ἐπὶ τοῦτον. / οὗτος πάλιν τίς ἐστιν; /  
 ⟨ΣΠΙΝ.⟩ μένουσι σῶοι, δέσποτα.

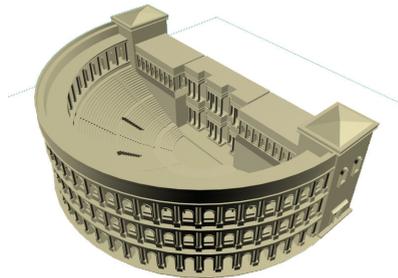
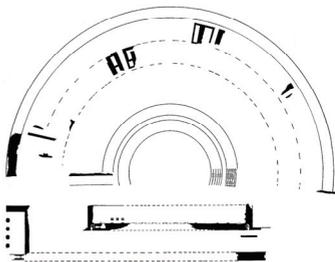
## FIGURES

I. *P.Oxy.* 413 rectoII. *P.Oxy.* 413 verso





V. Mime scene – Sabratha, 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD



VI. Theatre of Oxyrhynchus (Flinders Petrie excavation)