

## THE TROCHAIC TETRAMETER IN MENANDER

In Menander there are four scenes, or rather groups of scenes, written in trochaic tetrameters: one in the *Perikeir.*, two in the *Samia* and one in the *Dyskolos*. Trochaic tetrameters are also found in 25 fragments quoted by ancient authors; two thirds of them are no longer than a verse, the longest one consists of six verses and the rest of two to four verses. They are taken from eighteen different comedies, and as for their contents, seven are gnomic, nine are parts of a dialogue, and the rest may belong either to a dialogue or to a monologue. Therefore only in the four long scenes can one study the use of this meter in Menander. I am not concerned here with its metrical structure (<sup>1</sup>), but with its relation, as a characteristic rhythm, to the dramatic material, which the poet expressed in these scenes, and with its ethos, if it has any.

**1. *Perikeir*** 77—163: the tetrameters begin immediately after a XOPOY. Moschion and Daos come in haste (v. 75); Moschion is excited by the news which at the same time he cannot believe. After their discussion about the reward (vv. 85—100), Moschion sends Daos into the house to spy and bring him news (v. 106). Daos goes in (v. 108). Moschion walking up and down while he is waiting (v. 109), speaks his monologue. Daos comes back (v. 115) and gives his report. Moschion again sends him in (v. 120). Daos goes in (v. 120). Moschion continues his strolling, while he is speaking. Daos comes out (v. 126) walking slowly: this means that he brings no good news. Moschion gets angry with him. As Daos is very afraid, he tries to find a way of avoiding imminent punishment for his lies. Moschion asks him to approach (v. 144), but Daos finds a way out and persuades Moschion again. Now Daos sends Moschion into the house (v. 156 and 161). Moschion goes in *κοσμίως*, not with the air of the successful lover which he had, when he first came. Daos is left alone for a moment and then Sosias enters and a new scene begins in iambic trimeters. The characteristic of these small scenes is this: they are full of movement.

**2. *Samia*** 202—270: the first group of small tetrameter scenes in

1. For this see J. W. White *The verse of Greek Comedy* London 1912 p. 104 ff., H. Rubenbauer 'Der Bau des troch. Tetrameter in der neueren Komödie' *Philologus* LXXII 1913 p. 206 ff.

the *Samia* is without a beginning, following a gap in the Papyrus. In the first verse (202) Demeas sends Nikeratos in the latter's house. Nikeratos, completely upset, runs into his house (v. 203). Demeas listens and describes Nikeratos' activities inside. Nikeratos comes out (v. 210); he is infuriated with Chrysis and threatens to kill her. He goes in again (v. 219). Chrysis comes out, pursued by Nikeratos (v. 223). Nikeratos appears again following Chrysis (v. 225). Demeas pushes Nikeratos and the latter tries to free himself and catch Chrysis. They fight (vv. 225—230). They stop their fight and begin arguing (vv. 231—235). Nikeratos moves again towards Demeas' house (v. 235 f.). Demeas again stands in his way (v. 237). The violent movement stops; from here onwards he has only walking up and down (v. 242), while they are having a conversation. Finally Demeas sends Nikeratos in to make preparations for the wedding. He remains alone for some moments and then he leaves the stage; XOPOY follows. So, here we have the end of an act with trochaic tetrameters. The characteristic of these scenes: continuous movement; in the first half of them the movement is violent, in the second it is calm.

3. *Samia* 325—341: here the trochaic tetrameters follow iambic trimeters. After the opening of the act with Moschion's monologue, Parmenon comes, his monologue follows, and after a short dialogue between them, Moschion sends Parmenon into the house to fetch a sword and a cloak. He comes out speaking trochaic tetrameters (v. 325). Here the trochaic tetrameters begin with a new scene. Parmenon was annoyed by Moschion's order, but now, seeing that things are going well in the house, forgets about the sword and the cloak and runs to tell his master that everything is all right. But to his great amazement he infuriates his master, who sends him again for the sword and the cloak (v. 332). Parmenon understands nothing of Moschion's behaviour and hesitates to carry out his order, he makes a last effort to persuade him, but Moschion obstinately insists Parmenon goes in unwillingly. Moschion, left alone, considers the possible consequences of his bold plan. Here the Papyrus stops. There is, in these scenes too, much actual movement.

It has been shown that the characteristic of the three scenes is actual movement. The actors performing them must walk, quickly or slowly, run, and in general they must accompany their lines with adequate movement. So, it is clear that in these scenes this meter was chosen especially as a rhythm connected with movement, and consequently these scenes have a more lively tone than the scenes in iambic trimeters. The change of speakers within the lines, which occurs more frequently in the trochaic tetrameters than in the iambic trimeters<sup>1)</sup>, and more frequently

<sup>1)</sup>G. F. Osmun 'Intraline change of speaker in Menander' *Class. Phil.* LII 1957 p. 28 f.

also in the tetrameters of Menander than in anyone else's (<sup>1</sup>), stresses the movement in the dialogue itself and heightens, together with the rhythm, the general vivid tone of the tetrameter scenes.

4. **Dyskolos** 708—783: the beginning of the tetrameters is lost with the five missing lines of the gap (after line 702). The three mutilated tetrameters (708—710) belong to Knemon's speech and it seems probable that not much of it is missing, perhaps one or two verses. It is also very probable that, as in the *Perikeir.* and in the *Samia*, here too the tetrameters begin with a new scene and with Knemon's speech, after Gorgias coming back with his mother. These 75 tetrameters belong to the end of act four of the *Dyskolos* and the dramatic material is arranged within them in the following form: Knemon's speech (39 vv.)—dialogue (12 vv.), Gorgias' speech (10 vv.)—dialogue (12 vv.). Knemon's *ῥῆσις* is the most important part of these tetrameters, not only because it occupies more than half of them, but also because of its content: Knemon here admits that his behaviour has till then been based on wrong assumptions about life and men, that he has been wrong in living in the way he has lived. He brings together all his family, adopts Gorgias and makes him the head of the family. This part has also a very important place in the whole comedy: here begins the *λύσις* of the drama. The characteristic of Knemon's «rhesis» is, besides its importance in the plot, a serious and at moments moving tone. The comic element is very sparse and only in the dialogue parts of the tetrameters, especially in the second part after Gorgias' speech. This speech too, apart from being serious, has at the beginning the solemnity of the betrothal. There is also solemnity in Knemon's pronouncing his will (vv. 731—739).

The difference between the three scenes in tetrameters already examined and this one in the *Dyskolos* is striking: in the first cases the movement is the necessary means of acting and expressing the psychological situations of the characters, in the second actual movement is restrained during the speeches. Here the tetrameter seems to serve the poet a different purpose: it stresses the dramatic material with its vivid rhythm. The dramatic material, as we have seen, is very important in this point, and the change from the iambic trimeters to trochaic tetrameters does not only agree with the change in Knemon's attitude, which brings the *λύσις*, but also this rhythm seems to give the actor the possibility of reciting his speech in a special manner. On the other hand in both speeches, Knemon's and Gorgias', there is a didactic tone directed, one is inclined to think, rather to the audience of the theatre than to the

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<sup>1</sup>) White *The verse of Gr. Com.*, p. 106, and Krieg 'Der trochaeische Tetrameter bei Euripides' *Philologus* XCI 1936 p. 48.

speaker's listeners in the drama. In other words, Menander wants his audience to see well what he wants to show them in his comedy and for this reason he uses a kind of dramatic mannerism.

It seems rather improbable that the trochaic tetrameters were simply used for variety's sake and have nothing to do with the dramatic material expressed in them. The opinions, which various scholars expressed on this subject, prior to the evidence from the *Dyskolos* are the following: Rubenbauer (1) says that the troch. tetrameter in Later Comedy is found especially in passionate scenes of excitement, like the scene between De-meas and Nikeratos in the *Samia*. But the second scene in the *Samia*, between Moschion and Parmenon, is not especially passionate. Capps (2) considers this rhythm as a suitable medium of emotion, and says (3) that the change to trochaic rhythm intimates an emotional scene. But this does not explain the use of this meter, because emotional scenes exist in iambic trimeters as well, apart from the fact that there is no particular stress on emotion in all the tetrameter scenes. Wilamowitz (4) concludes that this meter is an agitated one and that it stresses the burlesque tone of the scenes, where characters appropriate to broad comedy are expected to be found (5). So, he sees the troch. tetrameter as an archaism which goes back to Old Comedy and consequently farcical material is expressed in this meter. This opinion is proved completely wrong under the new evidence from the *Dyskolos*, because here the material expressed in trochaic tetrameters is not only far from farcical, but it is not even comic. Therefore one cannot say that the use of the troch. tetrameter comes down to Menander from Old Comedy, at least as we see it in the *Dyskolos*. The other three cases of tetrameters in Menander are certainly comic, but not all of them farcical; e. g. the second scene in the *Samia*. According to the opinions mentioned the trochaic rhythm is considered to have a special ethos, i. e. it expresses emotion or passion, but Menander is not at all responsible for the formation of these opinions, the story goes back to fifth century Tragedy and Comedy where the problem of the use of the troch. tetrameter still exists.

The three Tragedians and Aristophanes wrote scenes in troch. tetrameters. There are also comic fragments in the same meter, which cover the period from Aristophanes to Menander, but the majority of them are very short. The opinions about the use of this meter in Tragedy are va-

1) 'Der Bau des troch. Tetrameter in der neueren Komödie' *Philologus* LXXII 1913 p. 206.

2) *Four Plays of Menander* Boston 1910 p. 161.

3) Op. cit. note on *Samia* 468 p. 325.

4) *Das Schiedsgericht* Berlin 1925 p. 153 f.

5) On the troch. tetrameter as an indication for dating see my paper 'Προβλήματα τοῦ Μενάνδρου ὑπὸ τὸ φῶς τοῦ Δυσκόλου' *Platon* IA' τεύχος B' 1959 p. 403 f.

rious and not, so far, successful in solving the problem. Maas (1) denies any particular ethos to the trochaic tetrameter ; it was used, according to him, in early Tragedy only for variety, but famous scenes with excitement, written in this meter, had influenced later drama ; e. g. the final scene of the *Agamemnon*. Wilamowitz (2) sees, where Aeschylus made use of them, a more elevated style, and notices that tetrameters are suitable for expressing quarrels (3). Fraenkel (4) notes the jerk with which the rhythm changes to greater excitement in the final scene of the *Agamemnon* ; he adduces as a close parallel the final scene of the *Oedipus Tyr.*, but he also remarks that in the case of the final scene of the *Ion* there is a change from trimeters to tetrameters, but without any excitement in the action. This can be explained : it is not the excitement that the trochaic tetrameter expresses here, but simply the actual movement, and there is actual movement in all these three final scenes. It is true that a quarrel is a usual theme in tetrameter scenes ; but are they in tetrameters because of the quarrels they contain, or because the quarrels must be acted with much movement ? Why, for example, in the final scene of the *Orestes* (1567 ff.) is the quarrel between Orestes and Menelaos in iambic trimeters, while the scene between the most devoted friends, Orestes and Pylades (vv. 729—806), is in troch. tetrameters ? The answer is that the first has no particular movement, because Orestes speaks from the top of his palace's roof ; in the second Pylades' rapid entrance brings the tone of movement and action.

Imhof (5) studied in detail the use of the troch. tetrameter in Tragedy. He finds in them dramatic movement and solemn style, suitable to superhuman beings (6). They are in the form of a stichomythia, antilabai and rhesis ; sometimes all combined in one scene. In their function they mark an introduction, a middle and an end, and they express important, often critical, moments in an epeisodion or tragedy. In Euripides, who in his late plays has scenes in trochaic tetrameters in increasing numbers (7), Imhof sees, in these scenes (8), a perfect development of form, and he

1) *Griechische Metrik* p. 19 (Gerke - Norden, *Einleitung in die Altertumsw.* I, 7 Heft).

2) *Griechische Verkunst* p. 265.

3) *Op. cit.* p. 136.

4) *Aeschylus Agamemnon* Oxford 1950 III p. 780.

5) 'Tetrameterszenen in der Tragödie' *Museum Helveticum* 13, 1956 pp. 125—143.

6) Similar views are expressed by Manning in his book *A study of Archaism in Euripides* (1916) p. 63.

7) W. Krieg 'Der trochäische Tetrameter bei Euripides' *Philologus* XCI 1936 p. 42 ff.

8) *Ion, Phoenissae, Orestes, Iphigenia Aulidensis*.

wonders whether the scenes are in trochaic tetrameters because they are exciting and important, or they are exciting and important, because they are in trochaic tetrameters. Although he notices the dramatic movement, he does not notice its relation to the troch. tetrameter, because he does not consider the tetrameter scenes from the point of view of their performance, but only for their particular contents and their meaning. Although this is not the place to discuss this problem in Tragedy, but only in its relation to Menander, one is very inclined to accept that, as in Menander, the troch. tetrameter has no special ethos in Tragedy either, but only, as a rhythm, it has its own characteristics, which must have been the reason why this meter was chosen for special scenes. Aristotle notices the special characteristic of the trochaic tetrameter in the *Poetica* 1449 a, 22 (1) and *Phetorica* III, 8, 4 (1408 b, 31) (1). The tetrameter was used originally in an *ὀρχηστικωτέρα* dramatic poetry; it is also a *τροχαιὸς ῥυθμός*, and the trochaic meter is *κορδακικώτερος*. It is then more than clear that originally the trochaic rhythm was connected with dance (cf. its alternative name *χορεῖος*), and was a «running rhythm», in other words its characteristic was movement of various kinds. Aristophanes' use of this meter presents a more complicated picture. But, especially in his early plays (because in his late ones he almost confined the tetrameter to the *epirrhemata* and *antepirrhemata*, and in the *Ploutos* he did not use it at all), we find that, besides the rapid entry of the Chorus (1), whole scenes follow immediately or later on in trochaic tetrameters. And in these scenes there is much movement, in one of them there is even an actual dance: *Pax* 299—338. Cf. also *Ach.* 302—334, *Eq.* 242—283. *Av.* 268—307, 317—318, 320—326, 336—344, 352—386. It is also notable that these scenes are closely connected, both in form and content, with the lyric parts which are near them.

As is shown the trochaic tetrameter in Menander serves two purposes. The first (*Perikeir.*, *Samia*) is that as a rhythm helps the acting, when the movement is especially required, and the second (*Dyskolos*) that it gives a special manner to the delivery of important speeches, which the dramatist wants to be stressed. In the first case Me-

1) Τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον τετραμέτρῳ ἐχρῶντο διὰ τὸ σατυρικὴν καὶ ὀρχηστικωτέραν εἶναι τὴν ποιήσιν, λέξεως δὲ γενομένης αὐτῇ ἡ φύσις τὸ οἰκτερόν μετρον εἶρε. μάλιστα γὰρ λεκτικῶν τῶν μέτρων τὸ λαμβανόμενον ἐστίν.

2) Ὁ δὲ τροχαῖος κορδακικώτερος· δηλοῖ δὲ τὰ τετράμετρα, ἐστὶ γὰρ τροχαιὸς ῥυθμός τὰ τετράμετρα.

3) White *The verse of Greek Comedy* p. 99 «the verse is adapted to rapid movement and is therefore frequently employed when the chorus enters in haste in the parade».

nander follows the theatrical tradition in general, but in the second he shows the influence of the Euripidean technique, as it appears in Euripides' late plays. Because, as Imhof (<sup>1</sup>) has pointed out, in Euripides' late plays the scenes in troch. tetrameters have a specially treated form, where the rhesis becomes typical. In this case the troch. tetrameter, as we take it, suggested a special kind of recitation by the actor, which was effective and successful and so became a manner. The epirrhema and antepirrhema of Old Comedy can be considered as an alternative source of a rhesis in trochaic tetrameters, but the case for Euripidean influence seems much more probable.

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1) Loc. cit. in page 63.

## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΙΣ

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Ὁ τροχαϊκός τετράμετρος ἐξετάζεται ἐν σχέσει πρὸς τὴν δραματικὴν ὕλην τὴν ὁποίαν ἐκφράζει, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τὴν ἔποψιν τῆς παραστάσεώς της ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ ὄχι ἀπὸ τὴν ἔποψιν μόνον τοῦ περιεχομένου καὶ τοῦ βαθυτέρου της νοήματος.

Ὁ στίχος αὐτὸς χρησιμοποιεῖται ὑπὸ τοῦ Μενάνδρου εἰς σκηνάς ὅπου ἡ δραματικὴ ὕλη ἀπαιτεῖ διὰ τὴν παράστασίν της κυρίως κίνησιν τῶν ἡθοποιῶν, τὴν ὁποίαν ἡ φύσις τοῦ τροχαϊκοῦ μέτρου ἐξυπηρετεῖ. Αὐτὸ συμβαίνει εἰς τὴν Περικειρομένην καὶ τὴν Σαμίαν· εἰς τὴν περίπτωσιν αὐτὴν ὁ Μένανδρος ἀκολουθεῖ τὴν θεατρικὴν παράδοσιν ἐν γένει. Ὁ τροχαϊκός τετράμετρος δὲν φαίνεται νὰ εἶχε εἰς τὴν δραματικὴν ποίησιν γενικῶς ὥρισμένον ἦθος. Εἰδικῶς εἰς τὴν Νέαν Κωμωδίαν δὲν εἶναι κατάλοιπον τῆς Παλαιᾶς, προωρισμένον διὰ νὰ ἐκφράζη φαρσοειδὲς περιεχόμενον.

Εἰς τὸν Δύσκολον ὅμως ὁ στίχος αὐτὸς παίζει ἄλλον ρόλον. Χρησιμοποιεῖται διὰ νὰ τονίσῃ τὴν μακρὰν κυρίως ῥῆσιν τοῦ Κνήμωνος, τῆς ὁποίας ἡ ἀπαγγελία θὰ ἐγένετο κατ' αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπον ζωηροτέρα καὶ ἐπισημοτέρα. Ἐδῶ φαίνεται ἡ ἐπίδρασις τοῦ Εὐριπίδου, ὁ ὁποῖος εἰς τὰ τελευταῖα τοῦ ἔργου χρησιμοποιεῖ συστηματικῶς τὸν τροχαϊκὸν τετράμετρον, καὶ μάλιστα εἰς μακράς ῥήσεις ἀξιολόγου περιεχομένου.