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A New Mime Script (P. Matr. inv. 44+119)


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Provenance unknown  
III AD

The fairly well preserved papyrus sheet shows 23 lines on the verso. The recto is blank except for some illegible ink traces of letters belonging to 2 lines. All margins are preserved: at the top 0.6, at the left 1, at the bottom 1.4 and the right side margin is the widest with 2.3 cm. The hand is informal, with uneven letter shapes, irregular inclination and neglected bilinearity. The text is compressed into a very thin column (3.7 cm), while the space between letters is reduced both horizontally and vertically. Attention is given to maintaining more or less homogeneous the width of the right margin, for which the horizontal of the ε protrudes further on several occasions (ll. 2, 3, 7, 9, 16) and at least seven words are abbreviated (ll. 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15). Systematic ligatures can be observed after ε, θ and μ. The β (l. 6) is cursive, while the ξ (l. 1) has an epigraphic shape. The closest paleographical parallels belong to the first half of the III AD, such as P. Oxy. XLIII 3100 (225 AD), which shows a very similar hand, with the same sequence of αρ, τι and ligatures after ε, P. Oxy. LI 3614 (200 AD), with comparable λλ sequence as well as the shape of letter ξ, or P. Bon. 15 (ca. 218–220 AD?) with a particularly resembling γα sequence.

It is noteworthy that each line begins with a new word. This feature coupled with the considerable width of the right margin suggests that there are no lacunae to cover in this direction. Therefore, most of the lines are entirely preserved. A strict continuity between the lines can be discarded, although a certain consistency of action or plot can be observed. The content as well as the format of the papyrus bear strong connections with other mime papyri.

At least four characters are mentioned: the messenger Iris (l. 7), the Cappadocian galli (l. 12), perhaps named as Νάρκιϲϲοι (l. 15) and probably also referred to as a plural entity receiving orders (ll. 1, 2, 3, 6, 16 and 18), the Phrygian flute-player (l. 17), whose parodic name might be Marsyas (l. 14), and a singular μοι / με (l. 16), perhaps the leader of the galli or the goddess herself as suggested below.

The text begins with imperatives (ll. 1–6), apparently addressed to the galli by their leader or by the goddess, which is interrupted by a narrative sequence in 3rd person (ll. 7–11/16) and seems to contain the beginning of a parodic hexameter. The dialogue returns (for sure in l. 16, but perhaps already in l. 11) with more indications and imperatives addressed to the galli (also in ll. 16 and 18), which might be uttered by the same actor as in ll. 1–6.

The imperatives, the alternation of first and second persons and the pronouns μοι/με suggest a theatrical context. Besides, the presence of the galli, the “effeminates”, the Phrygian flute-player, and perhaps the satyr Marsyas point to a humorous or ironical tone comparable to the one that appears in the genre of the mime. The text would be even more parodic and rare if one of the characters acting on stage were the statue of the goddess herself.

The whole text revolves around the galli (l. 12) probably performing their usual rites of injuring themselves (ll. 10–11). Their extravagantly wild appearance, violent screams and oriental looks could attract a massive public in the Roman period. They represented irony, humor and horror at the same time. The μαλακός is a persistent element and a recurrent stereotype of the mime. Our papyrus, in fact, bears close

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2 It must be mentioned that Galli is the title of a Roman mime by Decimus Laberius, from whom we only preserve fragments. This title has been transmitted by Aulus Gellius (2nd c. AD) and Nonius Marcellus (4th c. AD). However, the title could refer to the Celtic inhabitants of Gaul, very frequent characters of comic representations in the Hellenistic period (see C. Panayotakis, Decimus Laberius: The Fragments (Cambridge 2010) 263).

3 See n. 29.
connections with papyri of informal writing that contain annotations and indications concerning representations mainly of mime. As such, among others, we must refer to P. Oxy. III 413 (II AD), which preserves two mime fragments (“Charition” ll. 1–106, 188–230 on the front and Μοιχεύτρα ll. 107–187 on the back) with numerous scenic annotations and musical effects. This text has been written to be used by actors on stage or at their rehearsal for performance. A Μαλακός appears in Μοιχεύτρα playing the role of the confidant of the main character.

Also P. Berol. inv. 13927 (VI AD) contains allusions to several objects to be used on stage, references to concrete characters, as well as enumerated scenes to indicate the order of representations. The title of the fourth scene is precisely τὸ τῶν μαλακῶν, which appears besides some indications on female lingerie “bras and knickers” (περιζώματα φακίας) to be worn on stage. Although the specific purpose of the papyrus is still under discussion, it must have served an evident use on stage. Our papyrus also brings to one’s mind P. Hib. 54 (III BC), a letter where a flute-player is requested to attend to a festival or performance with Phrygian flutes, as well as a μαλακός, who shall bring kettledrum, cymbals and clappers, wearing fancy clothes.

More interestingly, the recently published P. Oxy. LXXIX 5189 (VI AD) labelled as “Mime” shows abbreviations of characters or actors, as well as indications of stage-action. As Parsons explains, there are quotations of the words to be muttered by the actors. The scenic indications are combined with direct quotes of dialogue and narration in third person. There is also a μαλακός on the verso (I. 15), although it is unclear whether the term refers to a character or to the effeminate role that a mime actor should play.

Furthermore, noteworthy signs appear at the right margin of our papyrus (ll. 6 and 14) with a horizontal and a short oblique protruding from their right end, perhaps also in ll. 10, 13, and 15. These signs are very much alike those that can be found above letters which indicate actors or characters in P. Oxy. LXXIX 5189 (e.g. ll. 5, 6, 12, etc. especially resembling those in l. 19). Other less visible signs can be seen in ll. 7 and 12 with a horizontal and a semicircle attached to their lower part, with a wider semicircle in the former almost meeting both ends of the horizontal. The signs of our papyrus serve to indicate abbreviations as these appear exactly above those words that have been left incomplete on the right side of the text.

Besides, an essential clue to understand the purpose of the papyrus lies in the fact, already mentioned above, that each line commences with the beginning of a word, while on the right margin there are no lacunae to be restored. That is to say, the lines – or at least most of them – are preserved entirely. However, there is no thread running through the lines, except for a few places under conjecture (ll. 5–6, 7–8, 15–16, 17–18). The continuity of the text cannot be recovered by solving the abbreviations on the right margin. As a result, it seems accurate to suggest that the text contains the beginning of sentences in an abbreviated form to be used at a mime performance or its rehearsal. It might have served to easily remember the script of a specific scene or to be directly quoted on stage.

The format of the papyrus, accordingly, is not literary. Its purpose is practical just like those papyrus fragments with theatrical indications that we have mentioned above. The writing is informal, abbreviations...
are used and all attention is given for saving as much space as possible, as it can be observed at the size of the sheet, the width of the column and the interlineal spaces. For this exact reason, some of these papyri were written on both sides, such as P. Oxy. III 413, which might accurately explain the presence of similar letter traces on the front of our papyrus. As Gammacurta\textsuperscript{11} points out, these types of texts for practical reasons needed to save space and make their usage easier on stage.

Taking all things into consideration, P. Matr. inv. 44+119 is in all probability a memoristic guide for the representation of a mime that presents only the beginning of sentences and not a continuous text in a deliberate way. The text recreates some of the elements that can be related to the cult of the \textit{galli}, such as self-injury and the Phrygian-flute. It presents rare words, such as \textit{ϲτυγνόω}, \textit{ἄνακραυγάζω} or \textit{κεραταύληϲ}, as well as the mythical names Iris, Marsyas and the Narcissi applied with comic intentions to some of the characters of the scene. The papyrus is particularly notorious because of the possible connection it makes between the \textit{galli} and the goddess Mâ of Cappadocian origin.

\begin{verbatim}
αρξά[ ]θετονς
ετυγνώκατε
απόθεθεθε
μεταπόλληϲ

5
tουτων γὰρ
δοτεμοιλιβαν—
eιρκίδανγε
ανεκραυγασεν
η[ ]

10
ετρωϲαντολα—
tιτρωϲκομενοϲ
γαλλοικαππαδο—
ωρκερινοϲ[ ]ω
τινι μαρϲυ[ ]

15
ναρκιϲϲοιθα
αυτονθετεμε
κεραταυλει
επεχετε θεα[ ]
κακεινοϲ[±3]

20
αιγυπτ[±3]
tιτ[±3]
ογυν[±3]

,γυν[±3]
\end{verbatim}

– “begin to … get serious … get rid of … with great … so this … give me frankincense”
– “… and the messenger Iris … cried out … then, in fact, she … they harmed themselves …”
– “harmed/ we harm (?) … Cappadocian (?) \textit{galli} … it is time to … to some Marsyas (?) … marvelous (?) Narcissi … put me here … to the flute-player … turn your gaze to … and those … Egyptian … breast (?) …”

\textsuperscript{11} In (2006) 239ff.
Commentary

1. ἀρξα[θε] τοῦ: an impertinent aorist addressed to a plural entity, just like the two following lines, as well as ll. 6, 16 and 18. Only in the first line the order is followed by the article τοῦ, which we would expect to be followed by a subst. (cf. e.g. X. Cyrr. 4.11.13 ἥρχον τοῦ λόγου, D.H. Th. 37 πρὶν ἀρξάσθαι τοῦ πολέμου) or an inf. (cf. e.g. X. An. 1.4.15 ἀρξόντες τοῦ διαβαίνειν, Plu. 2.1082b μὴ ἀρξόμενος τοῦ ζῆν).

2. στυγνόσατε: the verb στυγνό is a hapax according to the LSJ, translated as “to be gloomy”. Other testimonies of the word can be found in Dosith. Ars p. 435 (ed. Keil, CGL vol. VII) contristo λοπῶ στυγνῶ, with intr. sense “to be sad”, Rom. Mel. 23.11.3 (ed. Sources Chrétiennes) τί δὲ ἀκολουθεῖτε στυγνούντες σύτῳ, understood as “in bad mood” and Hom. Clem. 20.12.5 φευγόντων ἡμῶν σύτων καὶ στυγνοῦντων, where it means “to show a serious attitude”. Thus, this latter meaning fits well here, as these instructions can be addressed to the galli (v. supra), urging them to become serious (perhaps to get prepared for the solemn self-torture) as if they would have been doing something chucklesome before. The definition given by Hsch. s.v. (χώρικον “to move apart”) is regarded by Chantraine DELG (στυγέω s.v.) as “obscure and perhaps erroneous”.

3. ἀπόθεσθε: in middle voice very likely to mean “get undressed (for the self-torture?)”12, as the verb is often followed by an object13 (Od. 14.500 ἀπὸ δὲ χλαίνον θέτο, Hdt. 4.78 τὴν στολὴν ἀποθέμενος, Luc. Dlid. 20.10 τὸν κεφᾶν ἀπόθηται, Plu. 2.173d τὴν τιάραν ἀποθεμένον). However, it could be followed by an abstract acc. (cf. e.g. Ep. Col. 3.8 νῦν δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ἵματε τὸ πάντα, ὁργῆθας, χθόνα, κακίας, βλασφημίας, αἰσχρολογοῦν ἐκ τῶν στόματος ὑμῶν, Acta Thom. A 58 ἀπόθεσθε δὲ καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν καὶ τὸ ἀρχέως, Aristaeet. 1.2 ἀπόθεσθε τὴν ἐρίνην), perhaps referring here to galli being requested to abandon their festive attitude, which would suit very well with the previous line.

4. μετὰ πολλῆς: the third letter shows a horizontal trace on top of an upright, which is compatible with τ or γ as the horizontal trace of the same direction. The sequence μετὰ πολλῆς should be followed by a noun (cf. e.g. D.S. 11.36.2 μετὰ πολλῆς κραυγῆς, Plu. Demetr. 17.5 μετὰ πολλῆς σιωπῆς). The expression μεγά πολλῆς would make little or no sense at all.

5. τοῦτω γὰρ: τοῦτον is not likely to match λίβανον(ov) of the subsequent line, as it would sound most unnatural. It might rather introduce an independent sentence.

6. δότε μοι λίβαν(ov): another order probably addressed to the galli: “give me frankincense”. The burning of frankincense is a common element in religious ceremonies, often used at the beginning of a certain ceremony. See, for instance, ITomis 1.2.10 (III BC) (= Sokolowski, LSGC 87.10, lTheor. Samothr. app. 2.2), where the sacrifice of incense is considered as a privilege of the priest of the Samothracian gods to commence the meeting of worshippers, or IPriene 144.17 (= Sokolowski, LSAM 1.37.17), in which the honour of sprinkling incense at the theater of Dionysus Melpomenos as an opening ceremony belongs to the priest of Dionysus Phleos. Moreover, frankincense (λίβανος, μάννα, λιβανομάννα) is one of the most frequently mentioned substances in the Orphic Hymns as a recommendation to be burned by one of the μύσται of the community while reciting a certain hymn14.

7. Ἔρις δ’ ἀγγε(λος): Ἔρις could be an actor playing the role of the messenger of the gods herself, of a female character addressed as such or of one of the galli, who elsewhere might also receive the name of a flower (I. 15 Νάρκισσοι). On the other hand, the letter sequence αγγε could be read as ἄν γε, but much better seems to understand it as an abbreviation for ἄγγε(λος) “messenger”. A parodic hexameter of the Iliad composed by Matron of Pitane (Suppl.Hell. 534.50) begins in the same way: Ἐρίς δ’ ἄγγελος ἥλθε ποδήμενος, ὥκεα τευθεὶς15. In similar way, this line could also be the beginning of a parodic hexameter.

12 See DGE s.s.v. B 1.2.
13 The galli get rid of their turbans for self-torture in Luc. Asin. 37 οὶ δὲ τὰς μίτρας ἀπορρίπτοντες τὴν κεφαλὴν κάτωθι ἐκ τοῦ ἄγχους ἐλήσσοντες τοῖς ἥρχεσιν ἐγένοντο τοὺς πίθεις.
15 The corresponding fragments of the Iliad could be 18.166–167 εἰ μὴ Πηλέωι ποδήμειος ὥκεα Ἐρίς δ’ ἄγγελος ἥλθε θέους ἀπ’ Ὀλύμπου θυρήσεσθαι ορ 2.786 ἤροσιν δ’ ἄγγελος ἥλθε ποδήμειος ὥκεα Ἐρίς.
L. 7–10 could be compatible with hexameter rhythm, perhaps parts of two or three hexameters with comic intentions and quoted by one of the actors.

8. ἀνεκρόθογοικέει: Εἶπες is most likely the subject of this verb meaning “cried out”, “exclaimed” or “started to cry aloud”, with an evident comic notion. This outcry might be an order for the galli to “injure themselves” (see ll. 10–11).

9. ἡ δέ τότε: at the place of the first letter the upper traces of an upright with a horizontal protruding from its middle and the upper traces of an other upright suggest an η. As for the third letter, the traces of a round stroke with an upper oblique descending from left to right is almost certainly an ο, very similar to the one in l. 5. For the sequence οὗν τότε, see Hld. 8.16.5 οὗτοι δ’ οὖν τότε, Plu. Agis 57.3 οὗτος οὖν τότε. Another possibility is to read τιτρώϲκομεν τε, i.e. the imperfect of αἰδέομαι “showed religious respect (to the goddess)?”, followed by τε as a conjunction or an abbreviation.

10. τίτρωϲκομεν: the same verb in present part. “hurting”, which might refer to one of the galli. The galli performed various forms of flagellations in public, such as biting each other, wounding their arms, whipping themselves (Apul. Met. 8.27, 8.28), cutting their tongues out (Luc. Asin. 37), or getting their backs lashed by each other (Luc. Syr. 43–52). Another possibility could be to read τιτρόϲκομενς φορ, considering these two letters another abbreviation similar to the one in the former line, although no visible sign can be observed on the right margin as in other cases. In such case, τιτρόϲκομεν would be uttered by the galli, returning to the dialogue sequence.

12. γάλλοι Καππαδοϲ(κα): a first connection of the galli with Cappadocia leads us to the passage of The Golden Ass by Apuleius (8.24) where the leader of the followers of the Syrian Goddess decides to acquire an ass to use it as a means of transportation of the statue of the goddess. When the merchant is asked about its origin, it is presented as “Cappadocian, up for anything”16. In the parallel passage of the Lucius or the Ass of Lucian (36), Philebus, the leader of the group, when arriving to his house with the ass, announces: “Girlies, I’ve bought you a handsome sturdy slave of Cappadocian stock.”17 Cappadocia was renowned for providing horses as well as slaves of quality. Thus, it could be a reference to the Cappadocian origin of the ass that was used by the troupe for the transportation of the statue of the goddess (cf. l. 16). In any case, the remaining testimonies about the rituals of the followers of the three deities were worshippers of Mâ, whose cult in Comana of Cappadocia is described by Strabo (12.2.3), where she appears identified with the Greek goddess Enyo. In Latin sources, Mâ corresponds to the warrior goddess Bellona. Her followers would injure themselves violently (Lucan. 1.565–56719), were considered fanatici (CIL VI 490, 2232, 2235, Iuvenal. 4.123–12420) and their goddess Bellona was delightful in bloodshed

18 Cf. A. Hartmann, RE XXVII (1928) s.v. Ma; J. H. Waszink, RAC II (1954) s.v. Bellona; G. M. Sanders, RAC VIII (1972) s.v. Gallos, esp. col. 992f. Although Strabo (12.2.3) mentions a sanctuary of “Mâ” in Comana, the grammatical structure of the sentence impedes a clear interpretation of the passage. In fact, M.-C. Trémouille, Remarques sur Comana de Cappadoce et sa déesse, in O. Loretz et. al., Ritual, Religion and Reason: Studies in the Ancient World in Honour of Paolo Xella (Münster 2013) 408–416 raises doubts about the fact that the goddess of Comana would be called Mâ. In truth, the Greek sources that clearly mention the goddess of Comana call her ἥ Νεκτράφος θεᾶ (e.g.IKomana 76), Θεᾶ Μεγίστη τῆς χώρας (IKomana 96), or ἢ ἐν Κομάνῳς θέος (SEG 52.1464ter.10), while the inscriptions that quote a goddess Mâ come from other regions, such as Edessa in Macedonia or Sardis in Lydia. In any case, the remaining testimonies about the rituals of the followers of the three deities are very much alike, as all three goddesses share as a common root in Asia Minor as the Great Mother.
19 tunc, quos sectis Bellona lacertis \ saea movet, cecinere deos: crinemque rotantes, \ sanguineum popalis ulalarunt tristia Galli (ed. Weisse 1835).
20 non cedit Veiento, set ut fanatici oestro \ percussus, Bellona, tuo divinat (ed. Heinemann 1918).
Our papyrus would be the first Greek source to connect the galli with the Cappadocian goddess, whether she was called Mā or in any other way.

13. ὥρα μὲν τοῦ (ὁ) \(\pi\) : the sequence might be interpreted as “it is the moment of …”. This seems to be another stage indication.

14. τῶν \(\muσ\) [\(\muσ\)] : if read with iotacism, \(\muσ\) \(\nuπ\) (πωι) is possible, meaning “bag”, or its diminutive form \(\muσ\) \(\nuπ\) (πωι) “little bag”. If so, it shall be mentioned that, according to Apul. Met. 28.6, the galli had “bags” (in lat. sacculi) at hand to gather money and food from the spectators of their rites. A Syrian inscription (IGLS 11.45) alludes to the offerings of a worshipper of the Dea Syria, which happen to be bags (πήραϲ).

Nevertheless, the most interesting would be to read some form of the personal name Μαρϲ, the satyr or silen, whose connection to Cybele is noteworthy. He is considered to have invented the αὐλός (Apollod. 1.4.2) and is depicted in several times among the worshippers of Cybele, playing the αὐλός (Paus. 10.30.9, D.S. 3.58.3ff.). A possible conjecture is to identify him with the κεραταύληϲ, who appears in l. 17.

15. Νάρκιϲϲοι \(\thetaυ\)\[\(\thetaυ\)\] (\(\thetaυ\)\([\(\thetaυ\)]\)): Νάρκιϲϲοι most probably alludes to the galli, ironically referred to as “handsome” or “effeminate”, as they paid special attention to looking after their body, hair, face, make-up, and eyes. For other testimonies of characters that received names of some or “effeminate”, as they paid special attention to looking after their body, hair, face, make-up, and eyes.

For another stage indication.

16. αὐτοῦ \(\thetaε\) με: there is no necessary continuity with the former line. The pron. με might refer to the leader of the galli, the same who gives instructions in ll. 1–3, or even more probably to the goddess herself carried along as a statue. In Luc. Asin. 37 and Apul. Met. 8.25, 28 the leader of the galli acquires the ass, so that it can carry along the statue of the goddess on its back.

17. κεραταύληϲ: the word κεραταύληϲ only appears in the Latin Glosses and in Dosithoeus. The Phrygian αὐλόϲ is different from the Greek in that it has lower-pitched sound and its left part is a horn. Its use was mostly reserved for the religious sphere, especially for the cult of Cybele. The flute-player could be the slave of the galli as in the case of Apul. Met. 26.5.

18. ἐπίθετο θεο[\(\nu\)]: the verb could be constructed with the pers. dat., κεραταύληϲ “turn your eyes to the Phrygian flute-player”, if we admit a continuity with the previous line. However, θεο[\(\nu\)] can also mean “spec-
“tackle”, “performance” (with ἐπέχετε perhaps “hold” or “pause the performance”\textsuperscript{33} or a “seat in the theatre” (with the verb perhaps “take your seats”\textsuperscript{34}). We cannot discard reading θεᾶ “goddess”, ἐπέχετε θεᾶ[ν] meaning “hold the goddess”\textsuperscript{35} or ἐπέχετε θεᾷ[ν] meaning “pay attention to the goddess”.

19. κάκεινος: crasis of καὶ and ἐκεῖνος is very frequent in the papyri\textsuperscript{36}. This could be read as a nom. pl. κάκεινος or as a dat. pl. κάκεινοςες.

20. ἀιγυπτικός: this could be a form of the adj. Ἀιγύπτιος.

21. τιτθός: although it could be read as the gen. of the pronoun τίς (τινος), the third letter shows a first vertical also compatible with a τ, as the horizontal on the top protrudes further to the left than in the case of any other ν. In such case, the following traces must belong to another letter, perhaps a θ, which would lead to the nom. τιθός, perhaps a male breast in this case, referred to one of the galli.

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\textsuperscript{33} Cf. DGE s.v. ἐπέχω B II 2 (in forthcoming vol. VIII).
\textsuperscript{34} Cf. DGE s.v. ἐπέχω A III 3 (in forthcoming vol. VIII).
\textsuperscript{35} Cf. DGE s.v. ἐπέχω B I 1 (in forthcoming vol. VIII).
\textsuperscript{36} See E. Mayser, Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit (Berlin 1970) §30.