

The Serpent with a Human Head in Art and in Mystery Play



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tion of the mystery play stage, a convention much more common and widespread than has heretofore been recognised: indeed, it seems to me, with the exception of the Anglo-Norman *Adam* play, almost universal.

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And he gives the following citations: "*Philostr. in Ap.—Horat. Art. Poet. v. 340—Plut. de Curios.—Dion.*"

But in all these references the only thing suggesting the serpent is Apollonius' warning to Menippus: "σὺ μέντοι" εἶπεν "ὁ καλὸς τε καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν καλῶν γυναικῶν θηρευόμενος ὄφιν θάλπει καὶ σὲ ὄφεις." (IV, 25).

But to say, "You cherish a serpent and a serpent cherishes you," is not by any means to imply that the physical form of the beautiful witch Lamia is half serpent. Her loveliness, on the contrary, is implied throughout the story. See also *Diodorus Siculus*, Lib. xx; and Blaydes' note on Aristophanes' *Frogs*, v. 293. Compare also Roscher, *Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, s. v. *Lamia*, Vol. II, cols. 1819 ff.

The classical Siren may have had some influence on our human headed monster—the wings, the virginial face, the persuasive voice, are certainly closely parallel.