In 1977 Kok-Wee Phan published two papers on generation of certain Lie-type groups by systems of unitary subgroups. In the same year, his results were used by M. Aschbacher in his important paper on the characterization of Lie type groups over fields of odd order.

The revision project of R. Lyons and R. Solomon required a revision of many results from the classification era, in particular, of Phan’s Theorems. When we started this project, we had limited goals of just reproving Phan’s Theorems.

However, we gradually realized that Phan’s Theorems, as well as the Curtis-Tits Theorem, are fragments of a larger theory, that includes generation of arbitrary Lie-type groups, as well as groups over infinite fields and groups with non-spherical diagrams (Kac-Moody groups).