Menander's Characters in Context

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From the 4th Century BC to the Modern Greek Stage

By

Stavroula Kiritsi

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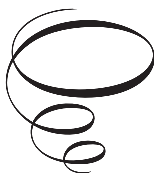

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ABBREVIATIONS

For Journals, I follow the abbreviations of *L'Année Philologique*

Other Abbreviations

Aristotle's treatises

Nicomachean Ethics: *NE*

Eudemian Ethics: *EE*

De Anima: *DA*

Magna Moralia: *MM*

De Motu Animalium: *De motu*.

Virtues and Vice*s: Vir.*

K-A: Kassel, R and Austin C. (eds.) (1983-2001), *Poetae Comici Graeci.* 8 Vols., Berlin.

LSJ: Liddell, H.G, Scott. R. and Jones H.S. (eds.) (1940), (9th ed., with supplement published in 1996), *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford

OED*: Oxford English Dictionary*

Fr: fragment

Frr: fragments

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book began life as a PhD thesis at the University of London, Royal Holloway. It gestated over many years, but during this time it also matured, or so I hope. It is here presented to the reader with further revisions, and the benefit of still more time in which to refine the ideas and expression. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisors Professors Anne Sheppard and Chris Carey who have taught, advised and supported me enormously. I am profoundly indebted as well to my examiners, Professors Alan Sommerstein and William Furley, whose comments were invaluable and helped me to improve this book substantially. I am also grateful to my mentor Professor David Konstan, who advised me on various aspects of my research, and read and commented on numerous drafts of my book. Professor Konstan had faith in me when I had lost faith in myself. His unfailing encouragement and precious philia have been my rock in my academic journey. My thanks also to the late Captain Vassilis Constantakopoulos, Mrs Karmen Constantakopoulou, Mrs Marina Marks and the Michael Marks Charitable Trust, for their generous financial support at various stages of my research.

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I dedicate my book in memory of my father Zissis, to my mother Maria and to my mentor Professor David Konstan.

INTRODUCTION

This book is a study of the representation of character and emotion in two historical epochs: classical Athens of the fourth and third centuries BC and modern Greece of the twentieth century. In this respect, it is an exercise in historical interpretation, in accord with the injunction of Fredric Jameson: "Always historicize!"[1] Modern approaches to literary and cultural analysis have recognized for some time that values differ from one society to another, and that ancient Greece cannot be taken simply as the crucible of our own ideals, as though nothing had changed in the course of two millennia and vast alterations of social conditions. Yet some areas of human experience have remained resistant to historical interpretation in this sense, above all the domain of emotion, where it is still common to suppose that ancient Greek anger or love or pity corresponds closely or even exactly to the meanings elicited by the equivalent terms in modern languages.

In order to provide a proper basis for comparison, I have elected to examine the fortunes of a single genre, that of New Comedy, for which there survive original Greek examples that permit of interpretation only from the pen of Menander. For the modern era, I have chosen to investigate not the tradition of New Comedy, broadly conceived, in the form of plays, movies, television series, and the like, where the influence of the classical genre is palpable. Rather, I look at modern translations and adaptations of Menander's comedies themselves, intended for production in the theatre, in order to see how changes, both obvious and subtle, in plotting, characterization, and language respond to deep transformations in

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[1] Jameson (1981), p. ix, "Always historicize" a "slogan … 'transhistorical' of all dialectical thought."

the social and indeed psychological make-up of the modern world. Tracing the modern Greek recuperation of Menander is of particular interest, and poses some special problems, for various reasons. Because Menander's plays were effectively lost until the very end of the nineteenth century, when substantial papyrus fragments were discovered and published, his reputation had been overshadowed by that of Aristophanes, whose flamboyant comic style had a major impact, as we shall see, on modern Greek taste. What is more, choosing to stage a comedy by Menander required considerable creativity on the part of the translator and producer, since scenes and whole acts remained to be filled in, at least until the discovery of the *Dyskolos*, which was the first, and till now still the only, Menandrean comedy to survive substantially intact. But this very circumstance is advantageous to the present investigation, since it allows us to see and evaluate more clearly how modern adaptations alter and transform the spirit of the originals, as well as the ways in which they remain faithful to Menander's own conception. What is more, the recovery of Menander for the modern Greek stage constitutes a special chapter in the cultural history of Greece today, one that we can examine, albeit only partially in this book, from its beginnings down to recent times. Although the discovery of new fragments of Menander created considerable excitement in the scholarly world, it took time for his plays to make a comparable impression on the wider public, and the Greek scholars, poets, producers, directors, actors, and critics who brought Menander to a general audience were engaged in a highly creative and socially conscious enterprise.

Questions of methodology loom large in a project such as this one. After all, the scholar too lives in the modern world, as much as the troupes that have been bringing Menander to life in the theatre, and if we are to investigate the differences in characterization and emotion in Menander's comedies and modern revivals, we need to be sure that we are not projecting our own conceptions and values onto the ancient Greek models – that is, performing the work of adaptation even as we purport to compare and contrast the classical and the contemporary "structures of feeling," to employ the useful

expression introduced by Raymond Williams.[2] In order, then, to have at least some control on the interpretation of character and emotion in Menander, I have had recourse to the detailed and profound analyses provided by Aristotle, Menander's near contemporary, above all in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Rhetoric*, along with material from Plato, and from the *Characters* of Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor as head of the Academy and very possibly a fellow student of Menander. For all their rich detail, transferring the descriptions (and sometimes prescriptions) by these Peripatetic thinkers to a work of drama entails risks: a playwright is not bound by convention, after all, and may well seek to subvert social norms. Nevertheless, the way Menander's characters think, feel, and behave must be recognizable to the audience, and so conform in their basic lineaments to the shared perceptions of what Barbara Rosenwein, in her study of affect in western mediaeval society, has called 'emotional communities'.[3] Thus, without taking Aristotle's definitions and character portraits as the last word on the structure of ancient Greek sentiments, and allowing for differences, sometimes substantial, between the representation of character and emotion in Menander and in Aristotle, by taking full account of the rich materials that the philosopher affords we can be more confident that we are approaching and interpreting the comedies in terms adequate to the culture in which they were produced, and which they inevitably reflect. We may note too, in this context, that Aristotle often begins his analysis of a problem with a review of commonly held opinions, or at least those of respectable people, which he refers to as *endoxa*.[4] His predilection for making sure that his theories and

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[2] Williams (1954, 1961 and 1977).

[3] Rosenwein (2006).

[4] Aristotle, *NE* 1145b2-23. I have used, as point of departure, the *endoxa* in my analysis of *erōs* in male characters in Menander's plays; see Kiritsi (2013a), p. 86 with n .7, where I also give further bibliography on Aristotle's views on *endoxa*. DaVia (2015 and 2017) has recently argued, convincingly in my view, that Aristotle appeals to *endoxa* only when he finds a topic to be especially opaque or controversial

explanations do not depart too radically from the prevailing views in his society puts a brake on the tendency among philosophers to construct idiosyncratic definitions of emotions and values, which do not necessarily reflect popular morality. So too, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* has the pragmatic goal of enabling speakers to be more persuasive, and so must take account of the sentiments and convictions of the Athenian public.

Analyzing Aristotle's views of character and emotion is a difficult task in itself, for various reasons. Aristotle's analyses are situated within a general philosophical framework that is in some respects alien to modern ways of thinking, and which must be considered when explicating his treatment. Especially in the case of the emotions, but also regarding virtues, vices, and other traits of character, there has been considerable discussion among scholars, and in some cases a properly historical approach has only recently been developed. For it is natural to suppose that the basic emotions have remained pretty much the same since classical antiquity. As David Konstan has written in his path-breaking study of the ancient Greek emotions: "It may seem strange, even impertinent, to question whether the emotions of the Greeks were the same as ours. We respond profoundly to their epic and tragic poetry, laugh at their comedies, are moved by their love lyrics, and look to their philosophy as a model for our own. How could this be the case if their emotional repertoire was in some important respect different from ours? Besides, emotions such as love, fear and anger are surely basic human capacities, and their manifestations must be similar everywhere, whether in antiquity or today."[5] Nevertheless, as Konstan demonstrates over the course of his book, there are significant differences between the way the Greeks understood such basic emotions as love, anger, fear, pity, shame, and other sentiments, and the way they are commonly perceived today, at least in the English-speaking world – and, as we shall see, in modern Greek as well. As Konstan and I argued, the classical notion of pity

[5] Konstan (2006), p. 5.

has in many respects given way to the modern sentiment of sympathy, with the result that a modern Greek (or for that matter English) version of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* has a different emotional register from the original tragedy. As we wrote: "although the term 'sympathy' may be out of place when analyzing the original Greek audience's expectations and responses to tragedy, and to Sophocles' *Philoctetes* in particular, it is entirely possible that it is the appropriate term to represent a modern audience's response to the play, especially if it is seen in translation. If so, then a translation of a drama such as *Philoctetes* will, however faithful it may be, inevitably undergo a certain transformation, for it will invite responses that fall within the range of sentiments available to the culture in which it is performed—and we cannot assume a priori that our culture is the same as that of classical Athens."[6] But this shift in sensibility does not mean that our response to an ancient work is necessarily impoverished; indeed, a self-conscious awareness of the horizon of our own structure of feeling not only grants us a critical perspective on our own literature but may also, retroactively and paradoxically, enrich the original work as well, in such a way that Sophocles' or Menander's characters and sentiments "acquire new dimensions for us that were not present in the original work or perceived in the same way by the spectators at the original performance."[7]

Antonis Petrides has called attention to another dimension of the cultural gap between Menander's comedy and the modern comedy of manners. As he puts it, to approach Menander's New Comedy "via the Comedy of Manners is to look at it through profoundly un-Greek eyes."[8] The reason, in part, is the way in which "the semiotised

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[6] Konstan and Kiritsi (2010).

[7] Ibid.

[8] Comedy of Manners refers to the kind of light, often cynical drama that became popular during the English Restoration (17th century), with the works of William Congreve and his contemporaries, which satirized aristocratic customs and pretensions, and is nowadays applied to similar exposés of upper class habits such as Oscar Wilde's *Importance of Being Ernest*.

New Comedy mask … denotes *ēthos*. This *ēthos* is not 'character' in either the modern psychological sense or that of 'total personality': *ēthos* is a constituent of action." The mask, Petrides explains, is a sign in New Comedy "not because this genre is concerned with 'manners' in any way," but rather because the mask expresses the relationship between "the structure of the soul, the behaviour of the citizen, and the wellbeing of the polis."[9] As I show in the chapters that follow, modern Greek producers of Menandrean comedy thought of Menander's characters mainly as "types," lacking any depth or interiority: they were not imagined as modern individuals, the bearers of a "total personality," but neither did they reflect the integrated social self that Petrides identifies as figured by the ancient mask. Correspondingly, the directors regarded Menander's comedies as devoid of any political dimension, and so did not suppose that the behaviour of his characters as citizens had any impact on the wellbeing of the city, as Petrides suggests. Rather, they thought of Menander's comedies as wholly apolitical, a view that has, to be sure, been challenged in recent criticism but has even today its defenders among scholars, the more so insofar as critics have confidently identified Menander as a spokesman for the elite aristocracy associated with Demetrius of Phalerum and with equal assurance as a defender of the radical democracy.[10]

It may be said as well that the directors of the modern productions showed little if any interest in Aristotle's views as indicative of the cultural context of the original plays. The polis, according to Aristotle, comes into being not only so that individuals may live, but so that they may live together with fellow human beings, and live

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[9] Petrides (2014), pp. 169 and 179 respectively. Petrides uses the term "total personality" to signify "the accumulation of small, coalescing ethical peculiarities" (p. 164), borrowed from Poe (1996). In general, see Gill (1986), pp. 251-273.

[10] For a political dimension in Menander's plays, see the different approaches by Major (1997) and Lape (2004), and more recently, for a general study of politics in Greek comedy including Menander, Sommerstein (2014c).

well.[11] He affirms that the purpose of political science is to help make citizens both good and disposed to perform noble actions.[12] We need a polis, along with political and public action, because it is in these spheres, as well as in the household and in personal friendships, that we are able to act for the good of others. But even if the political character of Menander's comedies is in doubt, the fact that the modern producers and directors of the revivals of Menander's plays regarded the role of character and politics in the originals as irrelevant does not mean that their versions reflect with greater fidelity the ostensibly apolitical spirit of the ancient genre; on the contrary, such a denaturing of the comedies may remove them further from the spirit of Menander's plays. But the ways in which modern adaptations diverge from the ancient models may have less to do with a modern notion of character as "total personality" and more with implicit changes in values and in the way the audience is expected to respond to the action on stage. To the extent that the modern versions are not "comedies of manners," any more than the ancient originals were, they may offer a fruitful perspective on the classical comic theatre by virtue of the very contrasts that they exhibit, and which invite a closer attention to often neglected features of the classical models.

The question of character bears also on the ostensible realism of Menandrean comedy. The inspiration for regarding Menander's plays as a mirror of real life is the famous exclamation of Aristophanes of Byzantium: "ὦ Μένανδρε καὶ βίε πότερος ἄρ' ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο;" (Ah, Menander and life, which of you imitated which? test. 83 K-A), and his example has influenced a great number of modern studies. For example, the modern Greek scholar Charambos Anninos argued back in 1894, before the discovery of papyri which included extended fragments of Menandrean plays, that Menandrean comedy has an enduring significance because its aim is to represent "a common action of

[11] Aristotle, *Politics* 1280b30-40.

[12] Aristotle, *NE* 1099b29-32.

[daily] life," and its hero is the *anthrōpos*, that is, the common man.[13] Petrides has challenged this notion of Menandrean realism, arguing that realism is rather a starting point for his dramas; although Menander deals with family crises in a "faithfully captured urban milieu" (or sometimes rural milieu, as in the *Dyskolos*), these crises are resolved through "magical" solutions that have little to do with real life.[14] It may be profitable, however, to distinguish between realism and naturalism. Menander's plots, to be sure, do not conform to ordinary events in real life, any more than the fact that the characters speak in verse does. However, his plots may be said to distill from the variety of human experiences just those that constitute a significant pattern of action, or what Aristotle in the *Poetics* calls a *praxis*, that is, the kind of story or *mythos* that is suited to the theatre, whether tragedy or comedy. Since Menander's characters respond in expected ways to their circumstances, their delineation is to this extent naturalistic. New Comedy has been characterized as realistic comedy with reference to its plots, delineation of character, and setting.[15] Modern Greek directors, translators and actors involved in productions of Menander have in general considered the plots of his plays to be something like folk tales for the predictability of their happy endings, and so not quite to the taste of modern audiences. However, his characters have been taken to be rather like us, our neighbours and the people whom we meet in daily life. Of course, they recognize full well that theatre never exactly imitates life (though life more often, perhaps, imitates the theatre – an alternative interpretation of Aristophanes of Byzantium's bon mot). But compared to Aristophanic comedy, which had been the dominant model for modern Greek comedy, many directors and translators saw Menander's plays as highly

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[13] Anninos (1894), pp. 417-418 « ὁ Μένανδρος εἶνε κωμικὸς ἠθογράφος λαμβάνων συνήθως ὡς ὑπόθεσιν κοινήν τινα τοῦ βίου πρᾶξιν, ὡς ἥρωα δὲ τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦ ὁποίου περιγράφει τὰ πάθη καὶ τὰ ἀτυχήματα .... »

[14] Petrides (2014), pp. 3, 21 and 42.

[15] For a discussion on Menander's realism, see especially Segal (2001), pp. 153-183, Miles (2014) and Petrides (2014), pp.10-83.

realistic, especially since their focus, like Menander's, was on ēthography[16], that is, the delineation of human character and behaviour.

The idea of a creative interaction between ancient and modern works is at the heart of the new discipline – insofar as it is new – of reception theory, which is now very much in fashion in classical studies. Rather than simply tracing the influence of the classics on contemporary literature or art, reception studies renders the interface between languages and cultural traditions a field of investigation in its own right. This is the view that Walter Benjamin proposed, in his classic essay on translation:

> No translation would be possible if, in accord with its ultimate essence, it were to strive for similarity to the original. For in its continuing life, which could not be so called if it were not the transformation and renewal of a living thing, the original is changed.… For just as the tone and significance of great literary works are completely transformed over the centuries, the translator's native language is also transformed. Indeed, whereas the poetic word endures in its own language, even the greatest translation is destined to be taken up into the growth of its language and perish as a result of its renewal. Far from being a sterile similarity between two languages that have died out, translation is, of all modes, precisely the one called upon to mark the after-ripening of the alien word, and the birth pangs of its own.[17]

In Benjamin's view, words do not merely persist in fossilized form, they ripen and mature, and this occurs at least in part as a result of the contact between languages that takes place with translation. Thus, the process that Benjamin suggests occurs not only across languages, but within any given language, as it develops over time; and as we concluded in the above-mentioned paper, "what better material for a case study than translations of ancient Greek into modern Greek?" Benjamin's vision has been taken up and refined by

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[16] Ēthography was a movement in Greek literature between 1880 and 1930.

[17] Trans. Rendall (1997), pp. 155-156.

scholars of the classics. Charles Martindale, in his influential study, *Redeeming the text: Latin poetry and the hermeneutics of reception*, notes that "discussions of translation usually assume that the meaning of the original is fixed, and that the translator's task is to reproduce it as far as possible in the target language; any argument is about the appropriate mode for so doing" (Martindale refers here to Dryden's distinction, in his *Preface to Ovid's Epistles* (1680), between metaphrase, paraphrase, and imitation). "But,' Martindale continues, "if meaning is not so fixed but constantly reconstructed, contextually and discursively, by communities of readers, then no translation, even an interlinear 'construing,' is ever 'innocent,' but always an act of interpretation, of rendering readable, which might involve (for example) foregrounding some elements and erasing others.... Translation, like interpretation, becomes rather a saying in other words, a constant renegotiation of sameness-within-difference and difference-within-sameness." [18]

In this connection, we may observe too that the "original text" in the case of the modern Greek translations of Menander was not always fixed, since few translators consulted previous translations or editions of the same play, including those places where previous translators had filled in fragmentary portions in the surviving texts. Inevitably, then, the translators were working with different editions, and given the lacunose nature of the text, there was plenty of room for subjective reconstruction and consequent divergence. In many cases, which I indicate in the individual chapters dedicated to the modern versions, the translator did indeed believe he was as close to the original text as was possible. In other cases, however, translators included in their translation their own interpretation as well, based on the modern Greek cultural context and ideology and making liberal use of modern Greek terms, especially relating to emotions, which often carry Christian connotations that differ significantly from the sense of the corresponding ancient Greek words. In this regard, I would characterize the modern Greek

[18] Martindale (1993), p. 86.

translations of Menander, broadly speaking, as adaptations, some with a closer affinity to the original while others permit themselves more freedom in translating at least certain parts of the play, depending on the requirements of the production and the need, in some cases, to make aspects of classical Greek culture intelligible to a modern Greek audience. As Lorna Hardwick has argued: "Translating cultures is multi-layered. It suggests, at one level, that translating words also involves translating or transplanting into the receiving culture the cultural framework within which an ancient text is embedded."[19] Thus, I have had to take into consideration modern Greek culture and ideology from 1908 to 1985, the period during which the two Menandrean plays examined here were repeatedly translated and produced, as well as attending to the ways in which each translation, to a greater of smaller degree, set the pattern for the subsequent versions of a given comedy.

Recently, Dimitris Maronitis has highlighted several so-called "divisions and dilemmas" regarding translation, such as "those between oral and written, faithful and unfaithful, systematic and ad hoc, between translation and paraphrase and so forth." He goes on to observe that these and other such oppositions have a special salience in regard to intralingual translations; as he puts it: "These primary distinctions along with the secondary divisions need to be taken urgently into account within the framework of Greek intralingual translation, which in our case covers the transfer of ancient Greek texts into modern Greek."[20] Maronitis goes on to observe: "it is important to decide upon the relation between the source and the target languages (ancient and modern Greek), both of which come in contact in the field of intralingual translation. The decision must be made by choosing between two contrasting interpretations: the first, ideologically charged as it is, considers the relation to be as unproblematically evident as the one between a parent and his or her offspring…. The other interpretation, which

[19] Hardwick (2000), p. 22.
[20] Maronitis (2008), p. 368.

celebrates its liberation from the ideological prison of older times, claims that ancient and modern Greek are separated by a series of drastic linguistic changes (in prosody, phonology, morphology, semantics, and lexicon)."[21] Maronitis is alluding here to a deep controversy in the Greek intellectual world over the relationship of modern Greek to the classical language, which has considerable political and even religious implications (for example, in regard precisely to the Byzantine heritage).[22] But he stresses as well, very much in the spirit of Benjamin and Martindale, that "a good translation (especially an intralingual one) is not a unidirectional act of a transfer of a text between two languages. In fact, what actually happens is the meeting of two languages and two texts somewhere midway on the bridge that connects them. The source language and the target language … meet precisely at the point where translation takes place."[23]

A further distinction, not emphasized by Maronitis, is between translations that aim at rendering a work textually and those that are produced mainly if not exclusively with the aim of mounting a theatrical production, as is the case with those that are examined in the present book. These translators and directors wish to produce a text that can be enacted on stage and move a living audience, and do not aim simply at creating a version that is philologically accurate. Lorna Hardwick has pointed out that when a translation is used as a performance text (that is, one intended for a production), it can affect audiences in synergy with other factors, which also become part of the overall translation: "when meaning is transmitted through the

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[21] Maronitis (2008), pp. 368-369.

[22] For a scholarly approach to the question of the continuity and discontinuity of Greek language and culture through the centuries, see Vryonis (1978).

[23] Maronitis (2008), p. 374. An important factor in any evaluation of the intralingual translation is the 'Language Question' in Modern Greek (see p. 373). For a linguistic and cultural analysis of the terms metaphrase and paraphrase and their significance for intralingual translation, see pp. 375-376.

medium of a stage performance, words are not the sole or even necessarily the most important vehicle of translation. Every aspect of the staging—set, design, lighting, costume, music, physical movement including body language, gesture and choreography — is part of the process of interaction with the audience, and thus is part of the translation. When subjected to analysis, these aspects of the production provide a kind of commentary, both on the ways in which the director, designer and actors have interpreted the play and also on how they see its relationship with the receiving cultures, in which the members of audiences are situated and out of which they respond."[24]

In my study of modern Greek productions of Menander's comedies, I have taken into consideration the several scholarly approaches to the reception of ancient texts outlined above, in particular those that were intended for performance for modern audiences.[25] But the nature of my material, which ranges from Aristotle and Menander to various modern Greek playwrights and directors, has obliged me to formulate my own approach to reception, which I hope to have articulated in a clear and appropriate way.

I may point out here that the term "reception," which appears in the title of this book, has itself invited, I suppose inevitably, a certain amount of controversy. Thus, Martindale writes: "It is worth asking if the concept of "reception" today serves any useful purpose, now

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[24] Hardwick (2000), p. 19. Hardwick further observes: "There is also, of course, the role of the translator's interpretation of the wider meaning of the source text…this aspect raises big questions about how the translator/writer views the relationship between ancient and modern, not just in terms of language but also in terms of values and ideas. The relationship between the two texts is also shaped by the readers or audience, who receive the new version and in their turn give it meaning," p. 10.

[25] I have found the following to be especially useful: Van Steen (2000), Hardwick (2000, 2003), Hall (2004, 2008), Hall and Wrigley (2004), Hall and Macintosh (2005), Easterling (2005), Hall and Harrop (2010), Michelakis (2006, 2010), Martindale (1993), and Martindale and Thomas (2006).

that the word's power to provoke has largely subsided. Simon Goldhill thinks it 'too blunt, too *passive* a term for the dynamics of resistance and appropriation, recognition and self-aggrandisement' that he sees in the cultural process he explores. Perhaps so, but it is worth remembering that reception was chosen, in place of words like "tradition" or "heritage," precisely to stress the *active* role played by receivers. Reception can still serve the interests of a wider range of those receivers than classics has traditionally acknowledged, by recovering or rescuing diverse receptions."[26] In this regard, I am content to align myself with Martindale's view.

One final point deserves mention, and that is a certain divergence, not to say incompatibility, between the way I have identified popular values in classical antiquity and today. Thus, I have made use of Aristotle and other classical texts in order to get closer to the way that ancient character and emotions were perceived, but when it comes to the modern translations and adaptations of Menander, we have many other sources of information, and do not need to have recourse to philosophical or rhetorical treatises on these topics. Modern native speakers of a language can to some extent rely on their own linguistic intuitions, and these can be supplemented by direct access to contemporary speakers. The method employed here has taken advantage of a resource that may bring us even closer to the way in which the modern versions of Menander have been conceived. For I have had the good fortune to be able to consult not only such textual sources as programme notes for performance, critical reviews, and other archival materials but also the producers, directors, actors, in the form of direct interviews with the major figures involved in the productions. To be sure, interviews[27] are a different genre from philosophical treatises, and the insights that may be gleaned from interviews do not necessarily map neatly onto

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[26] Martindale (2006), p. 11.

[27] In fact, the role of interviews in reception studies has been the subject of theoretical discussion. For the advantages and the limitations of interviews with modern directors and others, see Burke and Innes (2007).

the precise definitions and descriptions provided by Aristotle. But this means simply that both kinds of source must be used with care and with full awareness of possible disparities in the nature of our information due to the differences in the means by which we acquire it. More generally, the modern theatre is in many ways profoundly different from the ancient, and the different nature of our sources for the two may itself help us to keep in mind the great discrepancies between the respective social and cultural environments.

I proceed now to a brief review of the chapters that follow. This book comprises an Introduction, two Parts (I-II), and a brief Conclusion. Part I examines Menandrean characters in the context of the Hellenistic Greek audience and society, whereas Part II examines the reception of Menandrean comedy, with particular attention to character, in the Modern Greek theatre. Part I itself is divided into three sections. In the first (chapter 1), I consider Aristotle's view of character and emotion, as indicated above all in his *Rhetoric* (especially for his account of emotions), the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and *De anima* (*On the Soul*). This discussion provides the background to the analysis of character and emotion in Menander's comedies, with special focus on the *Epitrepontes* (chapter 2) and *Dyskolos* (chapter 3). The focus in this part is in large measure on *orgē* ("anger"), the emotion that Aristotle treats in greatest detail in the *Rhetoric* and which is the model for his discussion of other emotions. The close analysis of *orgē* permits us to see how other emotions or traits of characters function. I may say again that I use Aristotle as a hermeneutic tool, and not as a model for Menandrean aesthetics or ethics.

In the first chapter of Part II (chapter 4) I survey the "loss and survival" of Menander from antiquity and Hellenistic times, through Byzantium and the post-Byzantine period, to nineteenth-century Greece. Along the way, I discuss references to Menander in the commentaries on comedy of Konstantinos Oikonomos (1816); a comedy from the 15th century by Dimitrios Moschos written in Renaissance Italy (the first modern Greek instance of the reception of

Menander); the theatrical play *Agora* by Demetrios Paparigopoulos (1871), the second known adaptation of Menander's plays in modern Greek; and the first ever Greek production of Menander's *Epitrepontes* in 1908.

Chapter 5 examines the construction of characters in two modern Greek productions of *Epitrepontes*, in 1959 and 1980 (and its repetition in 1985), and chapter 6 in two productions of *Dyskolos*, in 1960 and 1985. Here, I keep continually in mind the departures from the ancient Greek models, whether deliberate, as in the filling in of parts that are missing in the original plays, or unintentional, a result of subtle changes in customs and vocabulary over the ages. As will be seen, there is a remarkable continuity in some respects, even as the deeper bases for the understanding of character and emotion have undergone crucial transformations. In eliciting the values of the modern works, it is hoped that some significant and sometimes overlooked features of the ancient comedies will also come into focus, thus living up to the challenging demand of reception theory that criticism illuminate not only the modern version but the original model as well.

PART I

CHAPTER 1

THE CONCEPTUAL WORLD OF MENANDER'S COMEDIES

The objective of this book is to investigate how the reception of Menandrean comedy on the modern Greek stage entailed or imported representations of character and sentiment that inevitably departed from the original versions. To this end, we need to determine, to the extent possible, how character and sentiment were perceived in Menander's own time. Various approaches to this question are possible, for example, a study of contemporary inscriptions or historical writing, insofar as it survives, or a close analysis of Menander's own language. But the latter method runs the risk of circularity, since we might easily be reading our own expectations into Menander's words. A method that avoids this pitfall – although it is exposed to other dangers – is to make use of the accounts of character and emotion by philosophers who provided explicit and systematic accounts of these matters, and who not only lived and wrote around the time of Menander himself but are believed to have had an influence on his outlook. The chief philosophers in question are Aristotle and his successor as head of the Lyceum, Theophrastus. There are many reasons why a close study of their analyses and theories is rewarding for the present enterprise, as will become evident in the course of the discussion that follows. The hazards of such an approach, in turn, are, first, that no two individuals concur entirely in their understanding of values and sentiments, even if they come from the same social milieu; and second, this is the more so if they are operating in such different genres as the philosophical essay and dramatic comedy. The first

objection, however, verges on nominalism: in spite of personal differences, people reared in the same society share a common cultural lexicon, and it is a principle of the history of ideas that, used with proper caution, disparate texts may illuminate one another. But can a philosopher's systematic and abstract account shed light on the creative and imaginative world of a comic poet? As William Short observes, "un modello professionale ... è un modello che fornisce una descrizione explicita di un'esperienza, elaborato per spiegarne un certo aspetto nella maniera piu rigorosamente analitica e comprensiva possibile." On the contrary, "Un modello folk può invece essere definito come comprehsione non tecnica o naïve che serve da 'teoria operativa' in un dominio dell'esperienza."[28] But Greek New Comedy itself operated with an abstraction from folk typologies, and there is no good reason to draw a sharp distinction between the accounts of Aristotle and Theophrastus, who illustrated their discussions with astute descriptions of everyday behavior, and the dramatic representations of Menander. I proceed, accordingly, to make cautious use of the best evidence we have for how emotion and character were conceived in Menander's own time. How useful the procedure is will become clear to the extent that this material helps us better to understand Menander's comedies and the new "structure of feeling" that emerges in the modern adaptations.

Aristotle, Theophrastus and Menander: the state of the question

We begin with a review of the relationship between Menander and the Peripatetic tradition, since this will help to situate the question of possible philosophical influence on Menander's conception of character and emotion.

A number of scholars have expressed the view that there is a strong Aristotelian or Peripatetic philosophical influence, on Menander's plays. However, there is no consensus as to the nature of this

[28] Bettini and Short (2014), p. 339.

influence. Briefly, the main approaches are as follows. Webster argues that there is a definite link between Aristotle's theory of poetry in the *Poetics* and the composition of the Menandrean plays. He also points out that "for the most part Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Rhetoric* provide the parallels needed for Menander, and it is a reasonable assumption that the main views in them were known to the better educated members of his audience." In addition, Webster traces influences on Menander's plays by Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus.[29] Bozanic, following Webster, claims that the presentation of character and events in Menander is governed by the principles of probability and necessity, as discussed by Aristotle in the *Poetics*.[30] Post and more recently Cusset have argued that the recognition scenes of Menandrean plays can be understood in terms of Aristotle's theory in the *Poetics*, raising the question of whether, and to what extent, these aspects of Aristotelian theory influenced Menander's art.[31] More importantly, Gaiser[32], Barigazzi,[33] Fortenbaugh[34], and Lord[35] have found a strong association between Menander and Aristotle's philosophy. Barigazzi in particular has read Menander's plays through the lens of Aristotle's aesthetic and ethical theory.

The influence of Theophrastus' *Characters* on Menander has been discussed by Ussher[36], Webster[37], Hunter[38], Reckford[39], Habicht[40],

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[29] Webster (1974), pp. 43-55 and 68-70.
[30] Bozanic (1977), esp. pp. 7-18.
[31] Post (1938), Cusset (2003).
[32] Gaiser (1960).
[33] Barigazzi (1965).
[34] Fortenbaugh (1974).
[35] Lord (1977).
[36] Ussher (1960), esp. pp. 27-31 and 75-77.
[37] Webster (1960), pp. 210-217.
[38] Hunter (1985), pp. 148-149.
[39] Reckford (1987), pp. 355-358.
[40] Habicht (1997), p. 122-123.