

## **Temple-raiders and smoking altars: Law, religion, and the stage in Menander**

The plays of Menander are a treasure trove of data for the social historian. Unlike the Old Comedy of Aristophanes with its fantastical utopias and topsy-turvy reconfigurations of the Athenian πόλις—and unlike Middle Comedy's mythological travesties and theogony tales—New Comedy depicts human, family drama. Although the plots are complicated, the chance occurrences are extreme, and the stock characters are exaggerated, Menandrian theater gives us a representation of contemporary daily life in Athens of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Indeed, this has tended to be the focus of scholarship on law in Menander to date: on Realien, using the plays and fragments as evidence for legal procedure in the twilight of the Athenian age. (Examples are listed in the first section of the bibliography, on the last page of the handout.)

I would like to push things in the other direction: to look at the theatrical roles of law, the courts, and legal procedures in the plays, the path not taken by most scholars (besides, importantly, Lape and, less extensively, Traill). Today, we will look in particular at the nexus of religion and law in Menander. I offer three theses on this topic: the first holds that both religion and law are presented positively in New Comedy, as things that work to resolve the social crises central to the genre's stock plots. The other two focus on how Menander uses legal and religious imagery and plot devices to direct the audience's empathy towards certain characters and away from others.

Thesis #1: Menander presents both the Athenian legal system and Athenian religious practices as positive social forces. In other words, Menander's characters tend to see law and religion each as a bulwark for their lives, not as a hindrance.

And the functions that legal and religious matters perform in Menander's plots tend to drive the plays towards resolution, generally in the form of recognition or *anagnorisis* and marriage for the procreation of citizen children. Let me provide one representative example for each category.

First, law. The most obvious example is *Epitrepontes*, a play whose title derives from a scene in which two enslaved men, Daos and Syros seek arbitration from the play's old man, Smikrines. Daos has found and taken in an exposed child, along with some trinkets left with it. Supporting a child is expensive, though, so Daos gives the child to Syros, who wants to raise it. But then Syros claims legal rights to the trinkets, and the two men convince Smikrines, a bystander to their argument, to serve as arbitrator. Smikrines—who, as it happens, is the maternal grandfather of the child in question—rules that the trinkets go with the baby, and thus to Syros. Now in possession of the trinkets, Syros encounters a man enslaved to the child's father. Recognition of the child's parents and its status as a citizen thus eventually takes place.

The arbitration scene is central to the plot of *Epitrepontes*, and makes the comedic *anagnorisis* possible. It is crucial to Menander's literary practice, because it creates intense dramatic irony, a hallmark of his style. The legal procedure holds high stakes for all characters involved, but all three view it as a valid and desirable means of resolution. And all three respect its outcome.<sup>i</sup>

Now Daos, the loser of the arbitration decision, is notably a sore loser, as you can see from #1 on the handout. "What an unjust matter! O, Heracles, there's never been a more terrible judgment!" But he's the exception that proves the rule: it's only after he's lost out that he takes a negative view of law's role in his life. His words here are a complaint less about the legal process in general and more about the particular instantiation of it, an indictment not of the system but of the

particular arbitrator. And they are more of a reflection on his own nature than they are on the nature of law in his society.

Second, religion. Menander's *Dyskolos* uses animal sacrifice as a central plot device and as a means of characterization. Early in the play, the young lover Sostratos straightforwardly describes his mother's religious behavior, #3 on the handout: "Mother's planning on sacrificing to some god or another—I don't really know which one—but she does this every day, sacrificing all 'round the entire district." Sostratos' words are wry, cynical, and dismissive. But the fact that his mother regularly and frequently conducts sacrifices labels her as upright and pious.

The audience, thanks to an expository prologue by the god Pan, knows his mother's motivation for the current sacrifice: she has had a dream foretelling of (romantic) hardship to be endured by her son. Since this is the reason for her ritual activity, Sostratos' mother is marked as clearly devout, and as clearly devoted to protecting her son's well-being. Such characterization is emphatically positive and makes Sostratos' mother a sympathetic character. And it reinforces the audience's empathy for the characters whom the divine prologue has endorsed: the mother and the unwed girl Plangon, Sostratos' beloved, who according to Pan has always been faithfully devoted to him and his nearby shrine.

The mother's piety is again negatively characterized later on, by Getas himself, #3 on the handout: "'Cause if she saw Paeonian Pan in a dream, we'd go sacrifice to him right away." This is Menandrian wit, and the complaint about her pietism perhaps elicits a laugh, or a knowing grin, from the audience. Yet the humor here derives not only from the mother's alleged superstition but also from the fact that Getas is voicing his own dissatisfaction at having to lug around all the materials for the sacrifice. While some members of Menander's male citizen audience may side with Getas' dismissal of his mistress' religious proclivities, I

suspect that many more would have been laughing not with but *at* Getas. His complaints about being overburdened are, after all, a comic routine so time-honored in Athens that even Aristophanes' *Frogs* opens with metatheatrical jokes about its cliché status. Hence, by contrast with Getas' stereotyped bellyaching, the mother's determination to pursue all means of protecting her son strengthens the audience's sense of her as devout, as advancing the play's successful resolution.

In addition, the sacrifice performed by Sostratos' mother has a mechanical effect on the play's plot. The sacrifice inspired by Pan, and performed by Sostratos' mother, ends up bringing Sostratos together with his beloved. And the sacrifice ultimately is responsible for the formation of the renewed comedic society. It leads to what Scodel acknowledges as the, quote "dramatic and thematic importance...[of] the final reconciliatory celebration," unquote.<sup>ii</sup> The act itself—and therefore the woman who undertook it—is central to the play. Lape's view of the importance of the mother's ritual activity is even broader: quote, "[t]he sacrifice to Pan also plays a key role in uniting city and country," unquote.<sup>iii</sup>

Thesis #2: in situations where two characters make opposing appeals—one to religion, the other to law—the character siding with pious devotion always prevails over the character siding with legalistic tactics. Now, of course, given the fragmented state of Menander's corpus, no such claim can be truly all-encompassing, but this observation matches the evidence that survives. Let's look at two major cases: *Aspis* and *Sikyonioi*.<sup>iv</sup>

In *Aspis*, I propose, Menander stages a confrontation between a character appealing to the law and a character allying himself with religion, and ultimately winning out. The play begins as the enslaved Daos returns from abroad, burdened with riches won by his master Kleostratos on a mercenary campaign, but believing

Kleostratos to have died in battle. Kleostratos' uncle, Smikrines, upon hearing the news, senses a chance to get himself married to Kleostratos' sister, and thus to claim Kleostratos' riches. In response, Daos concocts a plot to trick Smikrines into allowing the sister to marry Smikrines' other nephew, Khaireas, as previously planned. A divine prologue, the goddess Τύχη, informs the audience that Kleostratos is not in fact dead and that everything will work out in the end.

Smikrines, then, throughout the play is aligning himself with complicated permutations of inheritance law, the kinds of twists and turns that have occupied most of the attention of scholars working on the play.<sup>v</sup> What these scholars have not noticed on the whole is that Daos aligns himself with the divine prologue Τύχη, whose oversight of the marriage plot as a whole ensures that Daos' own deception plot will emerge successful. At #4 on the handout, the goddess states that she is “guardian of all these things, to arbitrate and govern them”—a striking use of legal terminology, and proof that, in Gaiser's words, “Dieses Stück ist ein Tyche-Drama par excellence.”<sup>vi</sup>

And Daos—the person who drives the comic plot towards its resolution, the person who devises machinations to protect the integrity of his master's family—Daos is linked closely in the play with Τύχη. Item #5 on the handout surveys the numerous times that Daos uses terminology derived from the basic noun of the goddess' name. Daos affirms that Τύχη is on his side, both linguistically and aspirationally. In fact, the core of Daos' deception plot—the core of his resistance against Smikrines' overpowering legalism<sup>vii</sup>—rests on faking the death of Smikrines' brother, and in item #6 on the handout, specifically on faking certain aspects of the funeral rites.<sup>viii</sup>

As we have seen, in *Dyskolos*, the most empathetic characters—namely, Plangon and Sostratos' mother—are the ones who ally themselves with the play's divine prologue and tutelary deity, Pan. Now here, in *Aspis*, the most successful

character, and arguably the play's real protagonist, is Daos, the character who allies himself most closely with the play's divine prologue and tutelary deity, Τύχη. So the picture that emerges in *Aspis* is Daos aligning himself with the divine prologue Τύχη and emerging victorious, and Smikrines aligning himself with complicated implementations of inheritance law and being defeated.

As Brown writes, quote, "Menander has set up a confrontation between th[e] law and love. He has drawn his characters in such a way as to make the audience side with love and against the law, and he makes love victorious in the end," unquote.<sup>ix</sup> Religion, in *Aspis* and in Menandrian comedy more broadly, is linked with love. The basic goal of the genre, after all, is to get citizen males and females married, preferably with some element of love involved; and for Athenians the solemnization of marriage was not marked by formal legal procedure, but rather by sacrifice, a feast, and other religious nuptial rituals.

In Menander's *Sikyonioi*, we have a similar situation with a similar outcome. Much of what survives of this unusual play centers on the sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis, where the rite of supplication is undertaken by Philoumene, an Athenian citizen girl enslaved in the household of the Sikyonian soldier Stratophanes. Both Stratophanes and another man claim to be in love with Philoumene. During the course of the play Stratophanes discovers that he was adopted by Sikyonians, and is Athenian by birth. When he finds this out, Stratophanes goes to Eleusis, tells the townsfolk (#7 on the handout) that he will not try to remove Philoumene to his home forcibly, entrusts her to the care of the priestess at the sanctuary, and asks the townsfolk for permission to approach her father regarding legal marriage. Meanwhile, at #8 on the handout, the other man, named Moskhion, approaches and tries to arrest Stratophanes on allegations of

kidnapping Philoumene<sup>x</sup>—to which Stratophanes replies, “you’re mad!,” interestingly using religious imagery for his colloquial idiom.<sup>xi</sup>

Thus *Sikyonioi* presents rival lovers competing over an enslaved citizen girl. One of the two renounces legal claims to ownership of her and entrusts her to the guardianship of a religious official, while the other attempts to pursue a legal claim. And what is the outcome? Stratophanes, who sides with religious appeals by entrusting Philoumene to the priestess, gets the girl—and Moskhion, who appealed to legal recourse, gets nothing. (Well, not quite nothing: it turns out Stratophanes is his natural-born brother, so Moskhion gets to be best man at Stratophanes’ wedding. But that doesn’t seem to make him very happy.) The pattern, such as we can make out of the fragmented corpus of Menander, is clear: religion and law are both positive forces in the genre, but when they come into conflict as sources of authority for different characters, for Menander, religion trumps law.

Finally, thesis #3: terms for and acts of transgression of religious law, though rare, form a distinct topos in New Comedy. And this topos underscores the negative portrayal of certain comedic characters. There are three constituents of the topos: the insult “temple-raider,” the adjective “unholy,” and the plot device of the smoking altar.

The Greek word for “temple-raider,” ἱερόσυλος, is used as an insult by Menander alone of the surviving Greek authors, as Gomme and Sandbach note, following Körte.<sup>xii</sup> I have listed all extant uses of the term by Menander in #9 on the handout. As we can see, the first two instances are spoken by μάγειροι, ritual professionals who would be hired to obtain, sacrifice, cook, and serve an animal for a religious offering and feast. In New Comedy, the μάγειρος often functions as

a comic braggart, an *alazon* figure. In *Aspis*, the μάγειρος is chastising his assistant for insufficient skill in pilfering ill-gotten gains,<sup>xiii</sup> while in *Dyskolos*, the μάγειρος uses the term in the midst of a rant about the divine stature of his own profession. Braggart, indeed!

The next instance of ιερόσυλος comes in a fragment of *Encheiridion* where an unidentified character expresses intense anger at a woman not present. The fourth item has Charisios calling his slave Onesimos ιερόσυλος after discovering that Onesimos helped a hetaira trick him into admitting a rape that he had committed prior to the play's beginning. So the term “temple-raider” is used only by blocking characters (mostly grumpy old men) or by alazons (braggarts like the μάγειροι), with the possible exception of the *Encheiridion* fragment. And the character using the term is generally represented as outlandish and overreaching, rather than just or pious or righteous. Perhaps the exotic, peculiarly Menandrian usage of the term as an insult is meant to distance the characters who use it from the audience's empathy?

The term “unholy,” ἄνόσιος, #10 on the handout, is not unique to Menander as an insult. Nevertheless, it does work in a manner similar to ιερόσυλος. It appears to be the particular watchword of the famous grouch of *Dyskolos*, Knemon, who calls three different people ἄνόσιος during the play. But it is also used to describe Knemon himself—after Knemon calls Pyrrhias unholy, Pyrrhias throws it right back at him, or rather right at his back, after the two have parted ways. And in extant Menander, ἄνόσιος is used once outside *Dyskolos*, here by the titular girl with her hair cut off in *Perikeiromene*, to describe how she has been treated by the soldier, the epitome of a blocking character in New Comedy.<sup>xiv</sup>



Now: the smoking altars of my paper title. In a fragment from a Menandrian play whose title is unknown, the apparent “hook” of the entire plot hangs upon sacrifice. Two characters discover that someone sought to incinerate a legal document while offering (or pretending to offer) sacrifice, #11 on the handout: “someone’s put a legal-challenge, πρόκλησις, out on the altar—and the fire’s fresh!”<sup>xv</sup> Though it is impossible to piece together a full summary of the play, I would venture that this πρόκλησις and this sacrifice, purported to have taken place just before the first lines of the play, would have been an important stage property in shaping the first act, and probably the entire work. The reconstruction of the play’s plot is as uncertain as its title, but the one who attempted to burn the πρόκλησις may have been a blocking character or antagonist. In that case, this use of a sacred item to destroy a legal document—if this is indeed what the fragment represents—would generate negative characterization in a fashion similar to Menandrian uses of ιερόσυλος and ἀνόσιος.

More concrete is the comedic phenomenon where one character attempts to “smoke off” another from the stage altar or out of the onstage shrine. The altar is commonly understood to be a locus of refuge for slaves,<sup>xvi</sup> and it is sacrosanct to the extent that masters cannot physically remove fugitive slaves from it. In Marshall’s description, quote, “[s]uch sanctuary is inviolable, based on a religious tenet that had been exploited as a dramatic trope since fifth-century Greek tragedy. Nevertheless, a loophole existed....If [enslaved asylum-seekers] leave by choice (because of the [fire’s] heat or smoke)...[the owner] has not technically violated their sanctuary.”<sup>xvii</sup> This is the context in which slave-owners bring (or threaten to bring) torches to the stage altar in the longest fragment of Menander’s *Perinthia*, as well as in Plautus’ *Rudens* and *Mostellaria*.<sup>xviii</sup>

In the passage of *Rudens*, the pimp says that he will apply fire to the altar of Venus,<sup>xix</sup> where his two slave prostitutes have taken refuge, and is rebuffed by the

old man. In *Mostellaria*, the clever slave character takes refuge from his older master's wrath by inching towards the altar while in conversation with him. In *Perinthia*, the old man Laches orders his slaves to surround the enslaved character Daos, who is currently on the altar, with brushwood.<sup>xx</sup> In each scene, the context is explicitly religious.<sup>xxi</sup> The three masters in these scenes endeavor not to “smoke out” their slaves, but actually to set them on fire. They plan not to set fire to (and hence destroy) the altar—that would be sacrilege!—but rather they want to use the altar to burn the slaves alive.<sup>xxii</sup> The idea of burning a living being, a *human* being, upon an altar invokes the specter of human sacrifice, although the characters do not make this allusion explicit.

Setting a human on fire is a violent and appalling act. Of course, as with animal slaughter, burning humans alive onstage would be impossible, and so the playwrights prevent it: in Plautus' *Mostellaria*, the play ends with the intercession of a friend and reconciliation between master and slave, while in *Rudens*, the old man forcibly blocks the pimp. We cannot say what happens to the slave on the altar in Menander's own *Perinthia*. And we cannot say that the asylum of the altar was sacrosanct in Middle Comedy, either, as Werner points out.

Although the scene in Menander, a fragment from *Perinthia*, is too decontextualized to be of much help for interpretation, the two scenes from Plautus have one important shared feature: by the end of the scene, the master has lost his power over his slave and is thereafter consigned to a subordinated role. In *Mostellaria*, the clever slave character effects a role reversal between master and slave, and in *Rudens*, the pimp finds himself completely beholden to the authority of the old man, who has come to the rescue of the girls enslaved by the pimp. The theatrical effect enacted by undertones of human sacrifice in these altar scenes is, I suggest, the following. In trying to burn their human property upon an altar, the master is attempting a corrupt, unlawful form of sacrifice. Attempting such an

impious, illegal sacrifice causes him to forfeit his sacrificial authority and legitimacy. In turn, this loss subjects him to another's power, whether it is that of his own slave or a citizen with full, proper sacrificial authority.

The specter of human sacrifice crops up once elsewhere in the Menandrian corpus, in *Samia*, #12. The speaker is Demeas, commenting on what he hears from inside the house of his neighbor Nikeratos; Nikeratos has just discovered that his daughter has a premarital child, who happens to be Demeas' grandson. "He's calling for fire—he says he's gonna burn up the baby, he's threatening it—my grandson, I'm gonna see 'im seared!"<sup>xxiii</sup> These lines constitute the most blatant and most shocking invocation of human sacrifice in extant Menander. The audience, thanks to the prologue (and to the conventions of New Comedy), need not worry about the child's fate. But for the sympathetic spectator, Demeas' sense of horror and suspense is palpable. The image is graphic. And it is made still more poignant by the sound-patterning on ὀπτρώμενον and ὄψομαι. Menander uses a subtext of unlawful sacrifice in this passage—specifically, the roasting of flesh—to enhance the drama of the scene, and thereby shapes it into an important climax for the play.

Likewise, grouchy Knemon of *Dyskolos* is associated with “devouring” or “eating alive” anyone whom he dislikes. Take #13 on the handout: the verb κατέδω is twice used in reference to Knemon. First, by someone fearful of his wrath (“he’ll eat us right up!”); then, by the man himself (“I’ll devour you alive”).<sup>xxiv</sup> An implicit comparison to the Cyclops is of course possible. But I see here again an underlying hint of human sacrifice.<sup>xxv</sup>

Threatening to eat another human being is aberrant behavior, just as trying to burn someone alive is a corruption of proper sacrifice. On the one hand, trying to burn someone alive causes masters to forfeit their sacrificial authority. On the other, Knemon's threat of cannibalism serves to reinforce his removal of himself

from healthy, properly sacrificing, human society. In this respect, Knemon is a tragic figure. By rejecting appropriate sacrifice in favor of some perverted form of it—and by falling victim to divine anger, according to the later testimony of the play’s μάγειρος—Knemon becomes, as Scodel says, a “*theomachos*,” with, quote, “a heroic, though self-destructive, stance.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

In sum, then: rare, subtle references to the sacrilege of human sacrifice in Menander and, after him, Plautus form a distinct topos in New Comedy, along with the terms ιερόσυλος and ἀνόσιος that indicate other transgressions of lawful religious practice. This topos both underscores the negative characterization of certain comedic personae, particularly the grouchy old man or the super-impious pimp, and also causes or symbolizes shifts in theatrical power between characters onstage. Taking this point with my prior two theses—that Menander presents law and religion as forces that militate towards a favorable resolution of the comedic plot, and that when the two are at cross purposes, characters siding with religion tend to prevail—we can form a picture of the nexus of law, religion, and the stage in Menandrian theater. In Menander’s New Comedy, empathetic characters, protagonists, and characters working towards comic *anagnorisis*, marriage, and resolution are pious. They respect the legal systems and customs of Attica, but do not seek to exploit those procedures beyond what is fair and reasonable. And though they regularly face opposition from antagonists—blocking characters who disrespect habitual religious activity, who use complexities of the law to satisfy their own base desires, or who pervert religious, legal, and social systems altogether—the “good guys” win out in the end, both because the comic genre demands it, and because divine agency rewards the devout and the just.

THANK YOU.

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## NOTES

<sup>i</sup> Cf. the rather more wry, but not necessarily negative, comment at *Epitrepontes* 417–418: πάντων δ’ ἀμελήσανθ’, ὡς ἔοικε, δεῖ δίκας | μελετᾶν· διὰ τοῦτι πάντα νυνὶ σφύζεται, “I guess I need to forget everything else and focus on lawsuits: *that’s* how everything’s saved nowadays.”

<sup>ii</sup> 1993: 172.

<sup>iii</sup> 2004: 134 n. 61.

<sup>iv</sup> Not covered here because of space constraints: *Epitrepontes* 1078–1131, where Onesimos gets the upper hand on Smikrines by outwitting him on legal and religious matters. Particularly noteworthy is Onesimos’ pseudophilosophical rant to Smikrines about the gods and just outcomes (1087–1099).

<sup>v</sup> See, e.g., Lape’s tenuous suggestion (2004: 108, *pace* Scafuro 1997: 288–293) that Smikrines is too old to be a legitimate candidate for marriage. Karabelias claims that Smikrines simply lies about inheritance law (1970: 369–370, cf. Gomme & Sandbach 1973: 76–77). Brown argues instead that Smikrines intends to adopt Kleostratos as part of his scheme (1982: 45).

<sup>vi</sup> *Aspis* 147–148: πάντων κυρία | τούτων βραβεῦσαι καὶ διοικῆσαι. Gaiser (1973) 122, citing lines 18, 58, 213, 248, 287, 411, and 418. Cf. also Lloyd-Jones (1971: 194): “Tyche and τὸ αὐτόματον play a great part in Menander,” with Gomme & Sandbach: “[t]his passage is, however, the only one in comedy where Τύχη is *clearly* personified” (1973: 74 *ad loc.*; emphasis preserved). I note that Smikrines’ words about Kleostratos at *Aspis* 167–171 (ὄφελε μὲν οὖν ἐκεῖνος, ὃν δίκαιον ἦν, | ζῆν καὶ **διοικεῖν ταῦτα** καὶ τεθνηκότος | ἔμου γενέσθαι τῶν ἐμῶν κατὰ τοὺς νόμους | **κύριος ἀπάντων**, “indeed *he* ought to’ve lived, it was just that he should, and he ought to’ve governed these things and after my death become guardian of all my things in accordance with the laws”)—but here Smikrines is being insincere to the utmost, to a degree evident not only to the audience (forearmed with Tyche’s own judgment of Smikrines’ character) but also to Smikrines’ interlocutor Daos. This insincerity thus further distances Smikrines from Tyche, rather than linking him closer with her.

<sup>vii</sup> E.g., Smikrines’ invocation of ἀπογραφὴ at 392.

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<sup>viii</sup> While greedy Smikrines is more concerned that the women of his brother's household will take advantage of the gutter systems to steal property he views as legally his without violating customs regarding death-pollution (*Aspis* 465–467, cf. Arnott 1979–2000: 1.81 n. 1).

<sup>ix</sup> 1982: 51. Cf. also Brown (1982: 50): “Smikrines is presented as being wholly bad, the worst character in all Menander's extant plays....But what does he do in the play to deserve this sweeping condemnation? He simply attempts to exercise his legal rights....The implication, that it is wrong to act in accordance with the law, is astonishing.”

<sup>x</sup> The exact basis for this charge is unclear. Arnott (1979–2000: 3.260–261 n. 27) hypothesizes that Moskhion thinks that Philoumene is legally owned by his household, on the grounds that his father is the Athenian representative of a non-citizen, Boeotian creditor who loaned Stratophanes the money to purchase Philoumene in the first place—and that thus Stratophanes' lodging of Philoumene with the priestess constitutes kidnapping. Another possibility (so Traill 2008: 24) is that Moskhion claims that Stratophanes' having raised an Athenian citizen as a slave was itself a kidnapping.

<sup>xi</sup> Three fragmentary half-lines shortly thereafter suggest that Stratophanes shunts Moskhion's continued legal harangue over to the priestess in Eleusis: ὁρᾷς; βάδιζ' εἰς ἐξετα[σμὸν... | πρᾶγμ' ἐξεταζε[... | παρὰ τῆς ἱερείας (“d’you see? Go for an examination...[to?] examine the/a matter...from the priestess,” 277–279).

<sup>xii</sup> Gomme & Sandbach (1973: 368 *ad Epitrepontes* 952); Körte (1925: 21).

<sup>xiii</sup> And the μάγειρος compares his assistant (Spinther) to Aristeides “the just” (230, cf. Arnott 1979–2000: 1.40 n. 2).

<sup>xiv</sup> She (Glykera) also refers to his (Polemon's) mistreatment of her with a legal term: ὑβριζέτω (*Perikeiromene* 723).

<sup>xv</sup> *Fabula Incerta* 7 lines 7–8. The working title and numbering are from Arnott (1979–2000) 3.529–555, and the source is *P. Antinoopolis* 55, dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. Arnott remarks that “[a]lthough these fragments do not contain any ties with previously known quotations from Menander, their language, style, metrics and imaginative quality combine to indicate a common source in one of his plays” (1979–2000: 3.530).

<sup>xvi</sup> Cf. *Heauton Timoroumenos* 975–976: *nemo accusat, Syre, te; nec tu aram tibi | nec precatorem pararis*, “No one's charging you, Syrus—you don't gotta find yourself an altar or a lawyer (intercessor).”

<sup>xvii</sup> 2006: 54.

<sup>xviii</sup> The source for the *Perinthia* fragment is *P. Oxyrhynchus* 855. See Arnott (1979–2000) 2.472–501. If Arnott (1994: 69–70) is right, *P. Berol.* 11771 contains the scene in which the enslaved character initially reaches the altar and claims asylum. In Plautus: *Rudens* 761–770, *Mostellaria* 1094–1115.

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<sup>xix</sup> *Volcanum adducam, is Venerist aduersarius, 761.*

<sup>xx</sup> Terence omits this scene from his *Andria*, which is partially adapted from *Perinthia* (Arnott 1979–2000: 2.474).

<sup>xxi</sup> Cf. *Mostellaria* 1104, where Tranio describes his location as “from holy heights” (*de diuinis locis*), and even *Rudens* 761 (cited above), where Labrax refers to fire by its deified aspect, not by its common name.

<sup>xxii</sup> The pertinent line from *Rudens* clearly shows that Labrax’ intention is to burn not the altar but the two women on (or in) the altar (*immo hasce ambas hic in ara ut uiuas comburam, id uolo, 768*). In *Mostellaria*, Theopropides calls for either the altar or its asylum-seeker Tranio to be surrounded by fire and brushwood—and it is made clear which of the two is meant in Tranio’s cheeky (and alliterative) response, “stop, since I so often seem sweeter seethed, not smoked” (TH. *iam iubebo ignem et sarmenta, carnifex, circumdari.* | TR. *ne faxis, nam elixus esse quam assus soleo suauior, 1114–1115*). In *Perinthia*, the refugee Daos’ concern is that he will be burned alive, not that the altar will be burned (ἔπειτα κατακαύσει μ’; line 4 as numbered at Arnott 1979–2000: 2.482). Here I disagree with Arnott’s note that brushwood is scattered “around the altar” (1979–2000: 2.483).

<sup>xxiii</sup> 553–555: ἡλίκον κέκραγε τοῦτ’. ἦν, πῦρ βοᾷ. τὸ παιδίον | φησὶν ἐμπρήσειν, ἀπειλῶν. ὑδοῦν ὀπτώμενον | ὄψομαι.

<sup>xxiv</sup> κατέδεται | ἡμᾶς, 124–125; κατέδομαί γε ζῶντα, 468. Contrast the non-sacrificial, more general-purpose insult κρ]εμᾶ, used at *Dyskolos* 249.

<sup>xxv</sup> This idea is in some sense related to the phenomenon mentioned by Scodel of “murder described in sacrificial language in *Agamemnon* and *Medea*” (1993: 164), in reference to Vidal-Naquet (1972). At any rate, whether Knemon were to consume the unfortunate bystander alive or consume him pre-killed, the end result would nevertheless be a slaughter; and since all meat consumed in Greece was the product of a sacrifice, one might think that human meat would, too, be a sacrificial product.

<sup>xxvi</sup> 1993: 167. Indeed, the sacrificial imagery in these passages seems in my view to demonstrate that Knemon possesses (albeit temporarily) the “grotesque efficacy” of a tragic protagonist, in Scodel’s term (1993: 166), at least in preserving his state of social reclusivity.