

# Love and Soil: Menander's Marriage Plots and the Athenian Politics of Eros

By ALEXANDER KIRICHENKO, Berlin

## Abstract

This article considers four of Menander's comedies as evidence of the change undergone by the Athenian discourse of "political eros" under the Macedonian rule. It argues 1) that the similarities between Euripides' *Ion* and Menander's *Epitrepontes* draw attention to the transformation of Athens from an expanding empire into an inward-looking society; 2) that, contrasted with the fifth- and fourth century ideal of the Athenian autochthons sacrificing their lives for their native land, the portrayal in the *Aspis* of an Athenian mercenary providing a dowry for his sister reveals marriage to be the only patriotic act still available to Menander's contemporaries; 3) that the plot of the *Samia* serves to blur distinctions between the Athenian citizens' love for their wives and their patriotic attachment to Athens itself; and 4) that the *Dyscolus* can be read as staging a victory of the ideology of Athenian marriage over an Aristophanic isolationist utopia.

Keywords: Menander, marriage, autochthony, patriotic ideology, Euripides, Aristophanes

## Introduction

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Athenian marriage provides what is perhaps the least suitable material for a "tellable" story: regulated by the strictures of the Periclean citizenship law that recognized as citizens only children of two autochthonous Athenians, marriage in Athens was a predictable outcome of a homosocial agreement between the male heads of the bride's and the bridegroom's families.<sup>1</sup> What allows Menander to turn this singularly unpromising subject matter<sup>2</sup> into an inexhaustible source of dramatic plots is the intrusion of erotic desire into the drab reality of the standardized legal framework.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lape 2004, *passim*, esp. 1-39. On the connections between the Periclean citizenship law and the Athenian autochthony discourse, see Loraux 1986; Ogden 1996, 166-188; Blok 2009; Lape 2010, 19-25; Leião 2012, 137-141.

<sup>2</sup> See Ogden 1996, 166-188. Cf. Sommerstein 2013, 33: "If all marriages had been made in this way, most of Menander's comedies could never have been written."

<sup>3</sup> On Eros in Menander, see Karitsi 2013. See also Brown 1993; Wiles 2001, 50-52; Omitowoju 2002, 223-228; Lape 2004, 91-95; Sommerstein 2013, 30-36. See also Lape 2004, 91-95, on the

Time after time, Menander dramatizes a conjunction between the spontaneity of individual erotic impulses and the constraints of autochthonous marriage – a conjunction so unlikely that it can often be only brought about by the intervention of a divine force.<sup>4</sup>

The goal of this article is to view Menander's marriage plots against the backdrop of the complex prehistory of the Athenian politics of eros. The use of eros as a political metaphor is ubiquitous in Classical Athenian culture.<sup>5</sup> Euripides describes the autochthonous Athenians' patriotic love for their figurative common mother as something approaching the intensity of erotic desire (E. *Erechth.* fr. 358 ἐράτε μητρός, παῖδες).<sup>6</sup> In Thucydides, Pericles urges the listeners of his funeral oration to imitate the heroic war dead by "contemplating the power of the city in action day by day and becoming lovers of that power" (Th. 2.43.1 ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὴν τῆς πόλεως δύναμιν καθ' ἡμέραν ἔργῳ θεωμένους καὶ ἐραστὰς γιγνομένους αὐτῆς).<sup>7</sup> In the *Knights*, Aristophanes portrays corrupt democratic politicians as "lovers of the people" who lull their beloved into inert slumber by praising his heroic achievements and by promising to erect a monument of his martial valor (Ar. *Eq.* 266-268, cf. Th. 2.41.4),<sup>8</sup> and elsewhere, most notably in the *Birds*, he portrays in eroticized terms the Athenians' longing for a utopian society purified from the oppressive exigencies of democratic politics (Ar. *Av.* 412-414, 1277-1279, 1316).<sup>9</sup> Finally, it is in opposition to the metaphorical eroticism of Athenian politics that Plato conceives of the "love of wisdom" as yet another figurative form of erotic desire.<sup>10</sup> Focusing on four of his better-preserved comedies (the *Epitrepontes*, the *Aspis*, the *Samia*, and the *Dyscolus*), I propose to read Menander's marriage plots as a symptom of the radical change undergone by the Athenian discourse of political eros from the Classical to the early Hellenistic period.

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strangeness of Menander's emphasis on love in a cultural context in which the only function of marriage was the production of legitimate heirs.

<sup>4</sup> On Tyche (and similar divine agents) in Menander in general (e.g. in the *Aspis*, the *Perikeiromene*, the *Dyscolus*, the *Samia*, and the *Epitrepontes*), see Vogt-Spira 1992; Zagagi 1994, 142-168; Gutzwiller 2000, 115-117 and 123-126; Miles 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Ludwig 2002; Wohl 2002; Scholtz 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Calame 2011, 15-16.

<sup>7</sup> On the "erotics" of Pericles' funeral oration, see Monoson 2000, 67-74; Ludwig 2002, 153-169; Wohl 2002, 30-72; Scholtz 2007, 31-42.

<sup>8</sup> On Aristophanes' *Knights* as a parody of Pericles' "erotic politics," see Wohl 2002, 73-123. Cf. Scholtz 2007, 43-70.

<sup>9</sup> Arrowsmith 1973.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Monoson 2000; Scholtz 2007.

A Comic Afterlife of Tragedy: The *Epitrepontes*

In Menander's *Epitrepontes*, Charisius rapes Pamphile at the Tauropolia, a nocturnal festival in honor of Artemis.<sup>11</sup> A few months later, he marries her without knowing that she is the girl he had raped. When he discovers that his wife has given birth to a child conceived before the wedding, he leaves her and hires a slave prostitute, a harper girl named Habrotonon.<sup>12</sup> In the meantime, a slave named Daos finds the baby exposed by Pamphile along with some trinkets that she had left with it as recognition tokens.<sup>13</sup> He gives the baby to a slave named Syrus, but keeps the trinkets in the hope of selling them. In the arbitration scene, in which Pamphile's father Smicrines acts as an umpire, Syrus demands that Daos hand him over the recognition tokens as well in order to be able to establish the child's identity in the future (*Epitr.* 218-375).<sup>14</sup> Among the objects that Syrus receives from Daos, Charisius' slave Onesimus recognizes his master's ring, which unquestionably identifies Charisius as the baby's father (*Epitr.* 376-418). Habrotonon happens to remember that she witnessed how at the Tauropolia a drunken young man raped a beautiful chorus leader whom she thinks she could recognize if she saw her again (*Epitr.* 475-492). In the meantime, Habrotonon pretends to be the mother of Charisius' baby (*Epitr.* 516-535). The news that Charisius has fathered a bastard child with a slave girl reaches his father-in-law (cf. *Epitr.* 645-646 ὑμῶν ἐταῖρος οὗτος οὐδ' ἠσχύνετο / παιδάριον ἐκ πόρνῆς...), who is now determined to talk his daughter into getting a formal divorce (*Epitr.* 714-758).<sup>15</sup> Secretly blaming herself for her husband's estrangement, Pamphile refuses to comply (*Epitr.* 714-715),<sup>16</sup> and her marriage is restored when Habrotonon recognizes her as the girl raped at the Tauropolia and she herself recognizes the tokens she had left with her baby (*Epitr.* 852-877).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> On rape in Menander in general, see e.g. Fantham 1975; Brown 1991, Heap 1998, Pierce 1998, Rosivach 1998, 13-50; Sommerstein 1998, Lape 2001 and 2004, Omitowoju 2002, 137-229; James 2014. On the rape-at-a-festival-motif in Menander, see Bathrellou 2012. On the rape in the *Epitrepontes*, see e.g. Gardner 2013; Glazebrook 2015. For a subtle reflection on the applicability of the modern term 'rape' to the plots of New Comedy, see Harris 2006, 297-332. Cf. Carey 1995.

<sup>12</sup> On Habrotonon, see Rosivach 1998, 99-101; Traill 2008, 196-203 and 223-235.

<sup>13</sup> On the role of the tokens of recognition in establishing the child's identity in the *Epitrepontes*, see Vesper 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Scafuro 1997, 154-168. Note, too, that to raise a freeborn child as a slave would have been a capital offense: *Epitr.* 468-470. See Vesper 2013, 222-223.

<sup>15</sup> On the legal issues behind this episode, see Scafuro 1997, 313-319; Traill 2008, 179-188; Petrides 2014, 65-66. On divorce in Athenian law, see Cohn-Haft 1995; Scafuro 1997, 306-309.

<sup>16</sup> Sommerstein 1998, 102-103; Porter 1999-2000, 160-165; Austin 2008; Traill 2008, 205-223; Petrides 2014, 32.

<sup>17</sup> Scafuro 1990, 150-151; Vesper 2013, 223-226.

More conspicuously than any of Menander's other extant plays, the *Epitrepontes* recycles motifs inherited from fifth-century tragedy.<sup>18</sup> Most references to tragedy in the *Epitrepontes* have to do with the role of the recognition tokens in determining the child's legitimacy:<sup>19</sup> in the arbitration scene, Syrus refers to multiple tragic antecedents in which mortal women raped by gods expose their children, who are later identified by the objects their mothers had left with them (*Epitr.* 325-343),<sup>20</sup> while a literal quotation from Euripides' *Auge* in the last act of the comedy (*Epitr.* 1123-1126) may indicate that Menander's intrigue follows the plotline of that particular Euripidean tragedy, in which (as far as one can tell from the scanty testimonies) Heracles raped Auge, Auge exposed the baby along with a ring she had received from her rapist, and Heracles recognized his son when he saw his own ring.<sup>21</sup>

The popularity on the fifth-century Athenian tragic stage of plots that focused on clarifying a child's legitimacy doubtless has to do with social anxiety surrounding the production of legitimate offspring under the strictures of the Periclean citizenship law, which limited Athenian citizenship only to those whose both parents were autochthonous Athenians.<sup>22</sup> No other extant tragedy is more explicit on that score than Euripides' *Ion*, which portrays autochthonous origins as a foundation of Athenian identity.<sup>23</sup> Not only is Athens repeatedly referred to in the *Ion* as an autochthonous city (e.g. *Eu. Ion* 29-30 λαὸν εἰς αὐτόχθονα / κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν, 590 κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας οὐκ ἐπέισακτον γένος) but the play's female protagonist, Creusa, is also the daughter of Erechtheus and a descendent of the earth-born Erichthonius (*Eu. Ion* 10 παῖδ' Ἐρεχθέως, 20-21 τοῦ τε γηγενοῦς / Ἐριχθονίου, cf. 267-268).<sup>24</sup> Creusa is the only survivor of the king's female progeny,

<sup>18</sup> On Menander's indebtedness to tragedy, see e.g. Pertusi 1953; Katsouris 1975, Goldberg 1980, 13-28; Hunter 1985, 114-136; Hurst 1990; Porter 1999-2000; Gutzwiller 2000; Vogt-Spira 2001; Omitowoju 2002, 154-162; Cusset 2003; Petrides 2014, 49-83. See also Low 2000, 188-221.

<sup>19</sup> Vesper 2013, 219-221.

<sup>20</sup> Ireland 2010, *ad loc.*; Gutzwiller 2000, 112. On Euripides as the main intertext of Menander's recognition scenes in general, see Furley 2014, 109-110, with references.

<sup>21</sup> Connections between Menander's *Epitrepontes* and Euripides' *Auge* were first noted by Wilamowitz in his 1925 edition of the comedy. See e.g. Anderson 1982 (a rather skeptical assessment of the degree of influence) and Rosivach 1998, 42-46 (attributing to the *Auge* a crucial role in the genesis of New Comic plots in general). There are also parallels between the *Epitrepontes* and the plot Euripides' *Alope* summarized by Hyginus (*fab.* 187): Scafuro 1997, 160-161; Stockert 1997, 9-10; Lennartz 1999; Porter 1999-2000, 158-159; Gutzwiller 2000, 112-113; Omitowoju 2002, 182-186; Bathrellou 2012, 175-177; Petrides 2014, 49-51.

<sup>22</sup> Scafuro 1990; Ogden 1996, 166-188; Omitowoju 2002, 21-26; Lape 2010, 129-136.

<sup>23</sup> Loraux 1981, 197-253; Saxonhouse 1986; Ogden 1996, 170-173.

<sup>24</sup> On the confusion between Erechtheus and Erichthonius, see e.g. Loraux 1981, 35-73; Rosivach 1987, 294-295. On the peculiar genealogy of Creusa in the *Ion*, see Lee 1997, 189.

the rest of which had been sacrificed to protect their native soil from a foreign invasion (cf. Eu. *Erechth.* frs. 360 and 370),<sup>25</sup> so that the continuity of the autochthonous royal line now depends only on her (Eu. *Ion* 277-280).<sup>26</sup> But the ethnic purity of the royal family is jeopardized by Creusa's marriage to a non-Athenian, the Thessalian king Xuthus. It is repeatedly stressed in the play that the union between Xuthus and Creusa is not a valid Athenian marriage and that the only reason why it was concluded in the first place was Athens' momentary military weakness (Eu. *Ion* 63, 293-298, 592 681-685; 719-724; 808-811; 839-842; 1069-1073).<sup>27</sup> Creusa's marriage to a foreign usurper remains childless. It turns out, however, that, as a young girl, Creusa gave birth to a child conceived out of wedlock. From the prologue, we learn that she was raped by Apollo; that she exposed her son, placing some recognition tokens in the basket; and that Hermes brought the child to Delphi, where he was raised as a temple servant (Eu. *Ion* 1-56).<sup>28</sup>

Creusa and Xuthus travel to Delphi to consult the oracle on account of their childlessness. The prophecy given to Xuthus specifies that the first person he will encounter upon leaving the temple is his child (Eu. *Ion* 534-536). This person happens to be Creusa's and Apollo's son, whom Xuthus names Ion and intends to install as his royal heir in Athens.<sup>29</sup> When Ion asks his putative father about the identity of his mother, Xuthus replies that, although he remembers no details, he assumes that he must have raped a Bacchante when, as an unmarried young man, he got drunk at a festival of Dionysus in Delphi (Eu. *Ion* 543-556).<sup>30</sup> This plausible hypothesis enhances Ion's apprehension as to the disenfranchised status that, as a bastard child of a foreigner, he would have in the racially pure autochthonous Athens (Eu. *Ion* 589-592).<sup>31</sup> That his apprehension is fully

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The play repeatedly alludes to the link between Ion's legitimacy and earth-born origins: e.g. Eu. *Ion* 303; 542. Loraux 1981, 229-232.

<sup>25</sup> Montanari 1981, 135-145; Calame 2011, 5-8.

<sup>26</sup> On Creusa as an *epikleros*, her dead father's surviving daughter, responsible now for the continuation of the paternal lineage, see Loraux 1981, 223-229. On the preservation of the racial purity of Athens as the central concern of the *Ion*, see e.g. Walsh 1978; Saxonhouse 1986, 262-268; Zeitlin 1996, 322-326; Lape 2010, 95-136.

<sup>27</sup> Loraux 1981, 215-219; Ogden 1996, 170-171; Kindt 2007, 14-17; Lape 2010, 106-107; Mueller 2010, 382-383.

<sup>28</sup> On Apollo in the *Ion*, see Zacharia 2002, 103-149. On the significance of Ion's divine descent, see Kindt 2007, 22; Lape 2010, 97-98.

<sup>29</sup> On Xuthus naming Ion and the etymological wordplay involved (Eu. *Ion* 661-663 Ἴωνα δ' ὀνομάζω σε [...] ἐξἰοντι μοι), see Loraux 1981, 201-202; Mueller 2010, 369-374. See also Zacharia 2003, 128-139.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Scafuro 1990, 147-148.

<sup>31</sup> Ion's only hope is that his mother may after all turn out to be an Athenian, which would give him at least partial citizenship rights: Eu. *Ion* 670-672. Cf. Loraux 1981, 219-222; Ogden 1996, 171. Citizenship in the *Ion* (as in the *Erechtheus*) is indeed a function of nature (= racial

justified becomes apparent when the news of Xuthus' newly found son reaches Creusa. Prepared to go to any lengths to prevent what she thinks is her foreign husband's illegitimate child from ascending the throne of her autochthonous ancestors, Creusa tries to poison the boy (Eu. *Ion* 735-1229). And when the plan fails, it is only a divine intervention that can prevent Ion, now keen on taking revenge, from unknowingly killing his mother (Eu. *Ion* 1250-1319): inspired by Apollo himself, the priestess who raised Ion appears with the basket in which he was originally exposed and which still contains the recognition tokens placed in it by Creusa (Eu. *Ion* 1320-1394). When Creusa accurately describes each of the objects, Ion has no choice but to recognize her as his mother (Eu. *Ion* 1395-1552).<sup>32</sup>

In her *ex machina* appearance at the end of the play, Athena announces that Ion's autochthonous / divine ancestry qualifies him as the next king of Athens (Eu. *Ion* 1571-1575), that he will become the ancestor of the four Ionian tribes, which will inhabit the Aegean islands and the coast of Asia Minor (Eu. *Ion* 1575-1588), and that Dorus and Achaeus, the mixed-race children that Creusa and Xuthus will be allowed to produce now that an autochthonous heir has been installed in Athens, will become ancestors of the non-Ionian Greeks (Eu. *Ion* 1589-1594).<sup>33</sup> As a result, the divine plan enacted in the *Ion* not only secures the purity of the Athenian autochthonous blood but also lays the foundation both of Athens' authority over her Ionian allies and of her superiority over her non-Ionian enemies.<sup>34</sup>

The strange story enacted in the *Ion* links the anxiety of illegitimacy, deeply ingrained in the Athenian autochthony discourse, with what appears to be Athens' imperial anxiety at the time around, or immediately after, the Sicilian expedition.<sup>35</sup> The restoration of Ion's autochthonous legitimacy is synonymous in the tragedy with overcoming a threat posed to the ideology of Athenian autochthony by the outside world – a threat epitomized by Creusa's non-Athenian husband. Xuthus, whose name may indeed have evoked Sicilian associations to Euripides' original audience,<sup>36</sup> uses the momentary weakness of Athens to jeop-

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purity) rather than a merely conventional (= verbal) notion: Eu. *Ion* 673-675, cf. Eu. *Erechth.* fr. 360.7-13, esp. 13 λόγῳ πολιτῆς ἐστὶ, τοῖς δ' ἔργοισιν οὐ.

<sup>32</sup> Kindt 2007, 19-21; Mueller 2010, 389-396.

<sup>33</sup> Ebbott 2003, 77-83; Zacharia 2003, 44-102; Lape 2004, 116-119.

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. Dougherty 1996, 261-262; Hall 1997, 56; Zacharia 2003, 44-102; Swift 2008, 69-85.

<sup>35</sup> For the dating of the *Ion* close to the time of the Sicilian expedition, see Zacharia 2003, 3-7 (with arguments for dating it to 412 BC); Swift 2008, 28-30 (towards the middle of the period between 420 and 410).

<sup>36</sup> For the evidence on Xuthus, a king of Sicilian Xuthia, and the possibility that Euripides' Thessalian Xuthus would have reminded the contemporary Athenian audience of the Sicilian expedition, see Smith 2012, esp. 115-136, on the (closely related) genealogical traditions of two mythical Xuthoi (one linked to Thessaly in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of*

ardize the purity of his wife's Athenian lineage. But the cautiously optimistic tone of the play derives from the fact that Xuthus is so successfully tricked by divine providence into promoting Athenian geopolitical interests that he emerges in the end as a wishful emblem of the non-Athenian world caught unawares by the inventiveness with which Athens, against all odds, maintains its congenital autochthonous superiority over the rest of Greece.<sup>37</sup>

Menander's *Epitrepontes* displays remarkable similarities with Euripides' *Ion*.<sup>38</sup> As in the *Ion*, the ultimate goal of Menander's plot consists in establishing the legitimacy of an Athenian child. Like Euripides' Creusa, Menander's Pamphile is raped in a religious context, conceives a child outside wedlock, gives birth, and exposes the baby, whose legitimacy is later determined with the help of recognition tokens. By raping a virgin in the context of Dionysiac revelry, Menander's Charisius literally implements the scenario that Euripides' Xuthus imagines must have led to his fathering the child that he eventually recognizes as his (cf. *Epitr.* 475-492 and *Eu. Ion* 543-556). As in the *Ion*, the two parents in the *Epitrepontes* recognize their child independently of each other, so that for a while he is alternately taken for his mother's and his father's illegitimate son. What is more, the meaning of rape gradually changes in the *Epitrepontes*, as in the *Ion*, from a blatant violation of divine justice to a manifestation of a sophisticated divine plan, which, as it turns out, has all along aimed to enable the Athenian protagonists to produce legitimate offspring (cf. *Men. Epitr.* 981-1131).

No matter how widespread this kind of thing would have been in reality,<sup>39</sup> being raped at an Artemis festival celebrating young girls' transition to the marriageable status is surely no less outrageous than being raped by a god universally regarded as an uncompromising proponent of justice.<sup>40</sup> But just as Euripides' Creusa is in the end forced to grasp the meaning of her traumatic

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*Women* and the other to Sicily perhaps as early as in Stesichorus) and on Euripides deliberately conflating the two.

<sup>37</sup> Swift 2008, 80-85. Cf. Zacharia 2003, 70-76.

<sup>38</sup> See Knox 1979, on the *Ion* as a precursor of New Comedy. See also Swift 2008, 86-94 (on the *Ion* and New Comedy in general), esp. 87-88 (on the *Epitrepontes*).

<sup>39</sup> In Menander's world, a girl is clearly expected to be raped at an all-night festival (*Epitr.* 451-454). Cf. Pierce 1997; Sommerstein 1998; Omitowaju 2002, 171-172.

<sup>40</sup> On the Artemis festival in the *Epitrepontes* as marking the female protagonist's transition into adulthood, see Bathrellou 2012, esp. 155-170, on the scanty evidence for the Tauropolia and on its relevance for the interpretation of Menander. Cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1988. Cf. Ion's incredulous reaction to Creusa's account of her rape by Apollo (veiled as a story that supposedly happened to a friend) – a speech in which he imagines the disastrous consequences that an admission of the possibility of divine injustice would have for human morality: *Eu. Ion* 429-451. See Scafuro 1990, 140-147; Zacharia 2003, 105-106. On the ambiguity of Euripides' portrayal of the divine in the *Ion*, see Kindt 2007, 24-26.

experience in the greater political scheme of things, so the rape of Menander's Pamphile, too, emerges as an illustration of the inscrutable ways of divine providence (cf. Eu. *Ion* 1595 καλῶς δ' Ἀπόλλων πάντ' ἔπραξε and Men. *Epitr.* 873-874 μακαρία γύναι, / θεῶν τις ὑμᾶς ἠλέησε).<sup>41</sup> Both plots serve to project an optimistic vision of the absolute inviolability of the ideology of Athenian autochthony: as the marriage to a non-Athenian husband fails to prevent Creusa from establishing a legitimate heir on the throne of her earth-born ancestors, so the rape of Pamphile (an event that under normal circumstances would seriously jeopardize a citizen girl's status as a legitimate reproductive agent) results in a proper marriage and the birth of a citizen child.

Although the confusion as to the legitimacy of Charisius' and Pamphile's child does echo some basic elements of Euripides' melodramatic scenario, the sexual politics of Menander's marriage plot conjures up a radically different social reality. In Menander, the child's parents are an ordinary Athenian couple rather than a pair of mythical figures meeting for a violent one-night-stand – a god raping and then forever abandoning a royal daughter.<sup>42</sup> To be a protagonist of Menander's marriage plot, the only claim to distinction that one needs to possess is one's status as an autochthonous Athenian citizen, whose sole goal in life is to marry and to produce more autochthonous Athenian citizens. While Euripides' *Ion* projects an image of an internationally interconnected world, in which Athens stakes imperial claims vis-à-vis her Ionian allies and her Dorian enemies, Menander's world is radically isolationist and inward-looking: rather than promoting the defiant spirit of Athens' superiority over others, the *Epitrepontes* conveys the sense that the Athenian reproductive politics is the only guarantee that Athenian identity can be preserved and perpetuated – a cause presented in the comedy as self-evidently worth pursuing for its own sake.

#### The Patriotic Act of Marriage: The *Aspis* and the *Samia*

In the fifth and fourth centuries, the state funeral – a ritual in which the city fulfilled its self-imposed duty to reunite Athenian citizens fallen in battle with what was notionally their common mother (cf. Th. 2.34) – functioned as the main locus of Athenian patriotic ideology.<sup>43</sup> In Menander's Athens, by contrast,

<sup>41</sup> Harris 2006, 320-331. On the socio-economic reasons for downplaying the psychological trauma of rape in Menander, see Sommerstein 1998, 104-105.

<sup>42</sup> On the contrast between tragic and comic rapes, see Omitowaju 2002, 184-186.

<sup>43</sup> Loraux 1986; Steinbock 2013, 49-58. Euripides' *Erechtheus* (cf. E. *Erechth.* fr. 370.67-70) provides what could be read as a mythical aetiology of this ideological construct: Calame 2011. See also Sonnino 2010, 36-42; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 25-30. Thucydides, in his version of Pericles' funeral oration, casts the state funeral as a locus of translating the

where men enrolled as mercenaries in the Macedonian army not to fight for their native land but to loot the defeated enemy's property (cf. *Asp.* 30-33), that solemn ritual was nothing but a distant memory. The gap left by its disappearance becomes sharply felt in the opening scene of the *Aspis* (*Asp.* 23-82), in which the slave Daos describes Athenians left to putrefy on the battlefield (*Asp.* 69-72). The fact that it is now taken for granted that the corpses of the war dead cannot be collected to be buried in a common grave in Attica but must be burnt directly on the spot (*Asp.* 74-78) is a painful reminder that the play was staged not long after Hyperides had delivered the last attested funeral oration in 322 BC, which, like all other Athenian funeral orations, emphasized the city's unconditional duty to bury the citizens in their native soil.<sup>44</sup>

Paradoxically, however, fighting in a foreign army is framed in the *Aspis* as something that enables Menander's contemporaries to perpetuate the sense of autochthonous pride. The only thing that the Athenians living under the Macedonian rule can do to celebrate their autochthonous identity seems to be to contribute whatever they can to the biological reproduction of the Athenian citizenry. This is precisely what Daos' master Cleostratus does as he goes to fight abroad in order to obtain money for his sister's dowry (cf. *Asp.* 8-10 and 34-39). Now that the prospect of heroically sacrificing one's life for the safety of Attic soil has become out of reach, concluding a proper Athenian marriage emerges as the only meaningful patriotic act that an Athenian can perform.

The status of marriage as a pre-eminently patriotic act becomes more tangible still in the *Samia*. Like the *Epitrepontes*, the *Samia* is a rape comedy.<sup>45</sup> As in the *Epitrepontes*, the rape takes place in the *Samia* during a nocturnal religious festival (this time, a festival of Adonis). Unlike in the *Epitrepontes*, however, the protagonists of the *Samia*, Moschion (the rapist) and Plangon (the rape victim), know each other's identities. What is more, Moschion immediately promises Plangon's mother to marry the girl and recognizes their child when he is born. What proves to be more difficult for Moschion is to own up to his deed before his stepfather Demeas.

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Athenian autochthony discourse into imperial terms: Flashar 1989; Foster 2010, 191-193. The funeral orations that were composed throughout the fourth century (from Lysias, commemorating the Athenians who had fought in the Corinthian War of 392/391 BC, to Demosthenes and Hyperides, who praise those killed in 338 BC in the battle of Chaeronea and in 322 BC in the Lamian war: Grethlein 2010, 107; Herrman 2009, 3-26) and parodied by Plato in the *Menexenus* (Tsitsiridis 1996, 63-92) testify to the central role that the state funeral played in the Athenian patriotic imaginary until the city lost its independence to Macedon.

<sup>44</sup> Herrman 2009. See also Loraux 1986, 45-75. On the possible historical background of Menander's *Aspis*, see Lamagna 2014, with references.

<sup>45</sup> Heap 1998; Omitowoju 2002, 197-203.

Demeas highlights the ambivalent position of Athens in the Hellenistic world – politically and economically inferior, yet superior in all other respects. Demeas himself occupies a liminal position between Athens and the outside world. On the one hand, he is (legally speaking) Moschion’s Athenian father and thus a guarantor of his stepson’s “Athenianness.” But on the other, Demeas not only lives with a non-Athenian woman (a Samian hetaera named Chrysis) but also derives his wealth from international trade: he happens to spend the entire time between the rape and the child’s birth on a business trip abroad. The plot of the comedy revolves around the misunderstandings that arise when Moschion, in order to conceal his premarital dalliance from his stepfather, convinces Demeas’ Samian concubine to put up a theatrical show by pretending to be his newborn baby’s mother. As a piece of mimetic theater, this spectacle proves to be a complete failure. But what it allows Menander to achieve, as in the *Epitrepontes* and in the *Aspis*,<sup>46</sup> is to stage a proper Athenian marriage as the only “real thing” available to an Athenian citizen of reproductive age – by relegating everything else into the utterly “unreal” domain of foreignness and theatrical pretense.

Tellingly, Moschion sees the wealth that his father had amassed by international trade as an obstacle to his personal happiness (Men. *Sam.* 12-13 ὃς γέγονα μέντοι, νῆ Δι΄, ἀθλιώτερος· / παχεῖς γὰρ ἐσμεν): he fears that Demeas will want to arrange for him a marriage with a similarly wealthy girl.<sup>47</sup> The girl that Moschion impregnated during his father’s absence happens to be a poor neighbor’s daughter, whom, under normal circumstances, Demeas would not have allowed him to marry.<sup>48</sup> It is rather significant that, in the *Samia*, the rape takes place in the context of the festival of Adonis. A private cult imported from the non-Greek east, unsponsored by the Athenians state, and celebrated only by women, the Adonis festival re-enacted the myth of Aphrodite’s love for a youthful shepherd killed in a boar hunt.<sup>49</sup> The death of Adonis was symbolically represented in a series of simple ritual acts: in the heat of the summer, women would sow seeds of fast germinating plants, wait until they sprouted, put the flower pots (the so called Adonis gardens) on the roofs of their houses to make them quickly wither in the sun, and then perform a ritual lament for dead Adonis.<sup>50</sup> The erotic aspect of the festival is underscored by the figure of Eros that regularly occurs in its depictions on Attic vases.<sup>51</sup> The fact that the Adonis gardens wither without producing any fruit (cf. Pl. *Phdr.* 276b1-8) must have encapsulated the festival’s function as a rare culturally sanctioned occasion in

<sup>46</sup> On the metatheatricity of Menander’s *Aspis*, see Gutzwiller 2000, 127-134.

<sup>47</sup> Lape 2004, 143-144; Sommerstein 2013, 40-44.

<sup>48</sup> On the “leveling” effect of rape in Menander, see Lape 2001. Cf. Omitowoju 2002, 204-229.

<sup>49</sup> Baudy 1986; Detienne 1994; Winkler 1990, 188-193; Reitzammer 2016.

<sup>50</sup> Reitzammer 2016, 18-26.

<sup>51</sup> Reitzammer 2016, 30-59 and 123-145 (plates).

which ordinary women could imagine themselves in the role of the goddess of love actively desiring a sexually attractive, non-procreative young beloved – a role sharply contrasted with the dull reality of being a wife and a mother.<sup>52</sup>

Quite fittingly, then, the Adonis festival is celebrated in Menander at the house of Demeas' Samian concubine Chrysis, who, excluded from the legitimate reproductive process, takes it for granted that she must get rid of the baby that she has had with him (*Sam.* 55-65).<sup>53</sup> Obviously enough, being raped and becoming pregnant during a celebration of the non-reproductive aspect of female sexuality constitutes a blatant contradiction in cultural terms: by forcibly impregnating Plangon at the Adonis festival, Moschion, as it were, puts the woman in her place, turning her back into the receptive ground for the male seed – the only function that she is allowed to fulfill in the Athenian autochthony discourse. The contrast between a barren concubinage and a proper Athenian marriage, intended to “harvest legitimate children” (cf. *Men. Sam.* 727 παίδων ἐπ’ ἀρότω γνησίων, cf. *Dysc.* 842, *Perik.* 1013-1014),<sup>54</sup> is made particularly palpable by the fact that a sexual encounter between a young Athenian man and a young Athenian woman leads to childbearing even though it takes place in a setting as conceptually adverse to procreation as the festival of Adonis hosted by a non-marriageable, by definition childless, foreigner.

The ephemeralness of concubinage is additionally underscored in the comedy by the fact that, when Demeas is led to believe that Chrysis is the mother of what, at the moment, he still believes to be *his own* child,<sup>55</sup> he is resolutely opposed to the idea of raising a bastard in the same house in which he had raised his purebred Athenian *stepson* (*Sam.* 132-135):<sup>56</sup> once there is a danger that the racial purity of the Athenian blood may become compromised, biological paternity automatically yields in Menander's world to the shared ethnic background. The strikingly nationalistic mindset, which Demeas displays in his attitude towards Chrysis, becomes apparent in his very first appearance onstage: right after his return from a business trip abroad, he talks with disgust about the foreign countries he had visited (even the sun is unwilling to shine on them!) and

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Vernant 1980, 130-167.

<sup>53</sup> Lape 2004, 103-104.

<sup>54</sup> On the so-called “ἐγγύη formula” in Menander and in the Athenian law, see VÉrirhac – Vian 1998, 232-254.

<sup>55</sup> Demeas' greatest anxiety is that, by bearing a child, Chrysis may indeed have transformed herself into a wife: *Men. Sam.* 129-131 τί γάρ; / γαμετήν ἑταίραν, ὡς ἔοικ', ἐλάνθανον / ἔχων. Cf. Lape 2004, 147-150.

<sup>56</sup> Lape 2004, 105-106. On the exemplarity of the father-son-relationship between Demeas and Moschion, see Mette 1986; Weissenberger 1991; Sherberg 1995, 37-56; Blanchard 2002; Traill 2008, 105-107.

praises Athens as the best place on earth (*Sam.* 96-111).<sup>57</sup> What is more, it is during this business trip that Demeas and Niceratus, his poor neighbor and Plangon's father, had agreed to arrange a socially unequal marriage between their children (*Men. Sam.* 112-118): when they look at themselves from a non-Athenian vantage point, the two Athenian men are made to realize that the social differences between them are of no consequence by comparison with their shared Athenianness.

The marriage between Moschion and Plangon is thus necessitated by the two factors (i.e. autochthonous citizenship and erotic attraction) whose combination is normally crucial for concluding a marriage in Menander's comedies but which, in this play, find themselves at odds with each other: while the two fathers think that they are arranging a proper Athenian marriage based on a homosocial agreement between them, Moschion wants to marry Plangon in order to make sure that the child that he has already fathered by raping her be legally recognized as an Athenian citizen. To reveal the illusory nature of this contradiction, the comedy resorts to theatricality and that the main protagonist of the play within the play staged in the *Samia* is Demeas' foreign concubine Chrysis.

To conceal the premarital relationship between Moschion and Plangon from their fathers, Chrysis agrees to pretend, until after the wedding, that Demeas and she are the baby's actual parents (the fact that she had recently given birth herself explains why she can now breastfeed it: *Sam.* 265-266). Demeas immediately interprets Chrysis' theatricals in tragic terms: not only does he react to the news by quoting from Euripides' *Oedipus* (*Sam.* 325-326 ὃ πόλισμα Κεκροπίας χθονός, / ὃ ταναὸς αἰθήρ, cf. *Eu. fr.* 554b),<sup>58</sup> but he also behaves like Euripides' Theseus who believes the false report of the adulterous liaison between Hippolytus and Phaedra.<sup>59</sup> In contrast to Theseus, however, who does not hesitate to blame his son for seducing his wife, Demeas adapts this tragic scenario to the nationalistic tenor of the play by exonerating his Athenian son and by holding his foreign concubine fully accountable (*Sam.* 338 αὕτη γάρ ἐστὶν αἰτία τοῦ γεγονότος).<sup>60</sup> When Niceratus finds out that Moschion, rather than Demeas, is the baby's father and that his own unmarried daughter, rather than Chrysis, is the baby's mother, it is his turn to wax paratragic: he compares Moschion to an

<sup>57</sup> Gaiser 1968; Hofmeister 1997, 297-303; Cusset 2000, 211; Fountoulakis 2009; Petrides 2014, 71-73.

<sup>58</sup> Sommerstein 2013, *ad loc.*, for further parallels.

<sup>59</sup> Jäckel 1982; Gutzwiller 2000, 109-110; Sommerstein 2013, 36-40.

<sup>60</sup> Note, too, that Demeas compares Chrysis to the pre-eminently seductive Helen of tragedy, from whom Moschion seeks refuge in a legitimate marriage arranged by his stepfather: 336-337 ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐμὴν / Ἑλένην φυγεῖν βουλόμενος ἔνδοθεν ποτε. For further tragic echoes in this passage, see Lape 2004, 150-156; Petrides 2014, 68-71.

entire array of tragic characters (Tereus, Oedipus, and Thyestes: *Sam.* 495-497)<sup>61</sup> and threatens to kill both the baby and Chrysis (Men. *Sam.* 553-561).<sup>62</sup> The paratragedy continues when, to save Plangon's baby from her enraged father, Chrysis seeks refuge in Demeas' house, notionally impersonating a stereotypical foreign suppliant of tragedy granted asylum in Athens (Men. *Sam.* 568-575).<sup>63</sup> Finally, when Demeas explains to Niceratus what had really happened, he draws an analogy with the tragic myth of Zeus transforming himself into a golden rain to impregnate Danae (Men. *Sam.* 590 τῶν τραγῳδῶν).

When, in the last act of the comedy, nothing seems to stand in the way of the planned wedding between Moschion and Plangon, Moschion himself suddenly puts up another theatrical show. Outraged by the fact that his father had accused him of having an affair with Chrysis, Moschion pretends to be going abroad as a mercenary (*Sam.* 616-640).<sup>64</sup> This seemingly gratuitous episode serves to underscore the intimate conjunction between marriage and patriotism that forms the basis of the ideal reality that Menander constructs on stage. The main reason why Moschion admits that he cannot contemplate leaving Athens (although he stresses that the insult that he suffered from his father would otherwise make this decision inevitable) turns out to be his love for his future wife (Men. *Sam.* 623-632):<sup>65</sup>

εἰ μὲν καλῶς οὖν εἶχε τὰ περὶ τὴν κορῆν  
καὶ μὴ τοσαῦτ' ἦν ἐμποδῶν, ὄρκος, πόθος,  
χρόνος, συνήθει', οἷς ἐδουλούμην ἐγώ,  
οὐκ ἂν παρόντα γ' αὖθις ἠτιάσατο  
αὐτόν με τοιοῦτ' οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἀποφθαρεῖς  
ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ἂν ἐκποδῶν εἰς Βάκτρα ποι  
ἢ Καρίαν διέτριβον αἰχμάζων ἐκεῖ.  
νῦν δ' οὐ ποήσω διὰ σέ, Πλαγγῶν φιλτάτη,  
ἀνδρεῖον οὐθέν· οὐ γὰρ ἔξεστ', οὐδ' ἔᾶ  
ὅ τῆς ἐμῆς νῦν κύριος γνώμης, Ἔρω.

<sup>61</sup> Gutzwiller 2000, 110-111; Traill 2008, 108; Petrides 2014, 66-67.

<sup>62</sup> On elements of Euripides' dramatic technique in this scene, see Zagagi 1994, 90-92.

<sup>63</sup> On this theme in tragedy, see Grethlein 2003. Note, too, the distinctly tragic tone of Chrysis' supplication: Men. *Sam.* 568 ὃ τάλαινα' ἐγώ. τί δράσω; ποῖ φύγω; Cf. e.g. S. OC 828 (the suppliant Antigone speaking) οἶμοι τάλαινα, ποῖ φύγω; See Sommerstein 2013, *ad loc.*, for further parallels with tragedy. See also Traill 2008, 109-110.

<sup>64</sup> Lape 2004, 168-170.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Hofmeister 1997, 328-329.

So, if there'd been no problems with the girl, and if there weren't so many obstacles – my oath, desire, time, our relationship, all things which fetter me, he'd not have charged me with an outrage like this to my face, but I'd have left the city, off to Bactria somewhere, or Caria, living my life there as a soldier. But I shan't do anything brave, darling Plangon, now – because of you! I can't. Love, ruler of my heart now, won't allow me. (trans. W.G. Arnott)

As a result, erotic desire for an Athenian woman becomes in the *Samia* synonymous with an attachment to Athens itself. What is more, Athens as a place where an Athenian man can marry an Athenian woman to “harvest legitimate children” emerges as the only reality available to an Athenian, while everything else – both the geographical expanses of the Hellenistic kingdoms from Caria to Bactria, to which Moschion claims to be willing to flee, and the Samian concubine, with whom Demeas himself could never produce legitimate offspring, – is implicitly relegated to the fundamentally unreal domain of theatrical pretense.

#### A Farewell to a Comic Utopia: The *Dyscolus*

In the *Dyscolus*, the typically Menandrian conjunction between erotic desire and Attic soil takes on an almost literal form: the rich city boy Sostratus is portrayed in the play as falling in love with a poor farmer's nameless daughter<sup>66</sup> – a girl so used to hard work, so pious and acquiescent, and so pure and unspoiled that she almost strikes one as the conceptual quintessence of the reproductive Attic soil (*Dysc.* 384-389). Sostratus himself, too, is cast as an exemplary Athenian bridegroom: although in the beginning the girl's half-brother Gorgias suspects him of intending to perpetrate sexual violence (*Dysc.* 271-298),<sup>67</sup> this fleeting intimation of a rape plot is immediately dispelled by Sostratus' determination to follow the standard homosocial protocol and to negotiate the marital arrangement with the bride's father (*Dysc.* 271-314).<sup>68</sup>

The only obstacle that Sostratus encounters along the way is the antisocial stance of the girl's father Cnemon, who resolutely avoids contact with anyone but his daughter and an old female slave (*Dysc.* 5-34 and 326-331). Cnemon's ideal of self-sufficiency is distinctly reminiscent of an Aristophanic utopia. The utopian dream that the protagonists of Aristophanes' *Birds* realize by founding a city in the sky stems from their desire to fly away from the Athenians' obses-

<sup>66</sup> On love in the *Dyscolus*, see Konstan 1995, 93-106; Kiritsi 2013, 90-93.

<sup>67</sup> Brown 1991; Harris 2006, 313-314.

<sup>68</sup> On the *Dyscolus* as the only extant Menandrian comedy, in which love at first sight rather than rape is the main motive for marriage, see Lape 2004, 110-115. Cf. Sommerstein 1998, 104.

sion with litigation into an untroubled tranquility of private life (Ar. *Av.* 40-45).<sup>69</sup> Needless to say, Menander's dull "realism" has nothing in common with Aristophanes' fantastic grotesquery.<sup>70</sup> And yet Cnemon's uncompromising isolationism makes him resemble a tamed version of Aristophanes' Peisetaerus and Euelpides: like them, he wishes he could fly away from the contentious society in which he is forced to live (his ideal is to become like Perseus who could not only fly but also turn people into stone: *Dysc.* 153-157) and imagines a utopian world populated only by antisocial people like himself – a Golden-Age-like world in which there would be no need for litigation, prisons, or war and in which self-sufficiency and isolation would automatically result in absolute justice (cf. Ar. *Av.* 40-45 and *Dysc.* 743-745).<sup>71</sup>

What makes Cnemon's utopianism so out of place is that it is incompatible with marriage – the only thing that matters in Menander's world: unable to endure his grumpiness, Cnemon's own wife has left him to live with her son from a previous marriage (*Dysc.* 14-26), while the only person that Cnemon can imagine as a suitable husband for his daughter is someone like himself (*Dysc.* 337 ὁμότροπον αὐτῷ νυμφίον). The reason why this stipulation reduces the girl's marital prospects to zero (*Dysc.* 337-338 λέγεις / οὐδέποτε) is not only that there is no one like Cnemon (cf. Men. *Dysc.* 324-325 ἐσθ' οἷος οὐδεὶς γέγονεν οὔτε τῶν πάλαι / ἄνθρωπος οὔτε τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς) but also that, to arrange a marriage, a suitor would normally have to talk to the bride's father (this is precisely what Sostratus naively thinks he could do: *Dysc.* 305-306), while there is nothing that Cnemon abhors more than talking to other people (*Dysc.* 332-335).

The plot solves the impasse by reducing Cnemon's isolationist utopia to absurdity – by letting him fall down a well, by allowing Gorgias and Sostratus to rescue him, and by making him realize that he cannot survive without other people's assistance (*Dysc.* 575-747). Like Thales, the stereotypical comic philosopher who falls down a well because he is too busy gazing at the sky to see what's underneath his feet,<sup>72</sup> Cnemon understands at long last that his lifestyle has all along been a delusion. It is this realization that leads to his reluctant consent to the

<sup>69</sup> Arrowsmith 1973; Hubbard 1991.

<sup>70</sup> The reception of Menander's comedies, both in antiquity and beyond, is dominated by sentiments echoing Aristophanes of Byzantium's memorable *bon mot*: "Ο Menander and life, which of you two imitates the other?" (ὃ Μένανδρε καὶ βίε, πότερος ἅρ' ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο;). See Zagagi 1994, 94-141. For a detailed discussion of Menander's "realism," see Petrides 2014, 10-83, with references.

<sup>71</sup> Cnemon's idea that his radically antisocial stance, if consequently implemented, could succeed in abolishing both wars and litigation is indeed reminiscent of the aspirations of such Aristophanic figures as Dicaeopolis from the *Acharnians* and Bdelycleon from the *Wasps*: Zimmermann 1983, 62-66; Telò 2016, 27-121.

<sup>72</sup> Pl. *Tht.* 174a. Cf. Ar. *Nu.* 180 and 1476-1511. See Dover 1968, xxxvi.

marriage between his daughter and Sostratus (*Dysc.* 711-740).<sup>73</sup> As a result, the comedy reaches a happy ending by unmasking the illusory nature of Cnemon's utopian aspirations and by revealing a proper Athenian marriage as the only tangible "reality" available to an Athenian citizen.

In the isolationist utopias for which Aristophanes' comic heroes long with an intensity of erotic desire,<sup>74</sup> the patriotic metaphor of collective eroticism propounded by the ideology of Athenian autochthony is replaced with the notion of an ideal society in which everyone can fully satisfy their individual erotic needs in the literal sense of the term.<sup>75</sup> By equating erotic desire with a desire for autochthonous marriage, by portraying an isolationist utopia as a deterrent symbol of sexual deprivation and pre-civilizational cruelty,<sup>76</sup> and by enacting a victory of Sostratus' reproductive normativity over Cnemon's self-destructive delusion, Menander's *Dyscolus* performs a powerful ideological gesture: it effectively turns the collective ideology of the Athenian state into a fully internalized object of individual desire.

## Conclusion

The notional equivalence that Menander draws between marriage and patriotism constitutes a striking new development of the Athenian politics of eros. While the *Dyscolus* stages a triumph of the Athenian reproductive politics over Cnemon's Aristophanic desire for an isolationist utopia, the *Epitrepontes*, the *Aspis*, and the *Samia* effectively modernize the metaphorical erotics of Athenian patriotism, which, in the Classical period, served both as a target of Aristophanes' ridicule and as a foil to his comic utopias.<sup>77</sup> The fifth- and fourth-century

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Traill 2008, 50-56.

<sup>74</sup> This is the case not only in the *Birds* (e.g. *Ar. Av.* 412-414, 1277-1279, 1316) but also, more obliquely, in the *Clouds*, where Strepsiades' desire for financial self-sufficiency granted by rhetoric is described as an "erotic passion for evil things" (*Ar. Nu.* 1459 *πονηρῶν ἐρασιῆς πραγμάτων*, cf. *Ar. Nu.* 1303), and in the *Frogs*, where tragedy plays the same role as utopian fantasies do in Aristophanes' other comedies – as a remedy of all social ills and as an object of an eroticized desire comparable in intensity to ravishing hunger (cf. the parallel between Dionysus' "yearning after Euripides" and Heracles' proverbial craving for food: *Ar. Ra.* 66-67 *τοιουτοῖ τοίνυν με δαρδάπτει πόθος / Εὐριπίδου*).

<sup>75</sup> This is most clearly the case in the *Acharnians* and in the *Lysistrata*, where the state, which causes nothing nutritional and sexual deprivation, is replaced with a private existence that guarantees an unlimited satisfaction of the fundamental physiological needs.

<sup>76</sup> Like Homer's Polyphemus, Menander's Cnemon throws stones at visitors and threatens to eat them alive: *Dysc.* 81-152, 467-468. Hunter 1985, 173; Petrides 2014, 35-38.

<sup>77</sup> One could argue that Peisetaerus' myth of the ante-terrestrial origin of the birds (*Ar. Av.* 469-470 *ἀρχαιότεροι πρότεροι τε Κρόνου καὶ Τιτάνων ἐγένεσθε / καὶ Γῆς*) makes best sense as a parody of the myth of the Athenians' "earth-born" nature. The myth of the original

ideology of Athenian autochthony conceived of the Athenian men's relation to Attic soil as a collective filial love for their figurative common mother, while the notion of "an erotic desire for the city and its power," with which Thucydides' Pericles seeks to inspire the Athenians in his funeral oration (Th. 2.43.1), served to promote their collective appetite for imperial domination.<sup>78</sup> Menander's notion of marriage as both a satisfaction of personal erotic desire and the only patriotic act still available to the Athenians living under the Macedonian rule postulates a radically different relationship between Athens and the rest of the world as well as between the individual and the state. In contrast to the Thucydidean man erotically drawn to the vast world outside the city's narrow confines, the only place towards which (and in which) the Menandrian man can feel erotic desire is his own native city. And by presenting the Athenian men's attachment to Athens in terms of erotic desire towards their own wives rather than filial love towards their common mother, Menander transforms patriotism from the earth-born citizens' collective duty into a thoroughly individualized, and thoroughly internalized, emotion. What Menander constructs on stage is thus a normative image of Athenian patriotic ideology not as an obligation enforced by the state but as an integral part of each citizen's individual subjectivity.

PD Dr. Alexander Kirichenko  
 Urbanstraße 70a  
 10967 Berlin  
 E-Mail: alexanderkirichenko2@gmail.com

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earth-born circular humans split in two for their impious plan to conquer heaven, which Plato's fictional Aristophanes tells in the *Symposium* (Pl. *Smp.* 190b5-9), can also be interpreted along similar lines. See also Wohl 2002, 73-123, on Aristophanes' *Knights* as a parody of Pericles' "erotic politics."

<sup>78</sup> See Calame 2011, 15-16 (on Euripides urging the Athenians to love their common mother); Wohl 2002, 55-62 (on the Athenians "falling in love with Pericles' version of them") and 171-214 (on the erotics of empire in Thucydides' *History* in general).

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