Tyche and Peripatetic Ethics in Menander's *Aspis*

The rediscovery of Menander's comedies in the early 20th century allowed for fresh study of the seminal Greek author. The efforts of scholars have allowed us to reconstruct and begin to study the texts and have offered valuable insight into the development of drama in the fourth century. In this paper, I will explore Menander's place in the intellectual community of his time, and in particular his relationship with Peripatetic philosophy.

The connection between Menander and the Peripatetics is suggested by Diogenes Laertius. In modern scholarship, Barigazzi (1965) and Cinaglia (2012, 2014) demonstrate a connection between Menander and the Peripatetics by finding Aristotelian resonances in the text of Menander. In this paper, I build upon their work by analyzing the ethical terminology in *Aspis*. I then challenge the conclusion that Menander's works are specifically Peripatetic in thought. While the language in *Aspis* shows a Peripatetic influence, I conclude that Menander reconfigures Peripatetic terminology to create an ethical viewpoint that is his own.

To show how Menander develops his ethical thought, I focus specifically on two elements: first, *tyche* as the personified force directing the plot for an ethical purpose; and second, the law of *epikleros*, an element of social realism that reinforces Menander's vision. *Tyche* is a common theme in Aristotle, and my paper examines how Menander's use of *tyche* in the drama differs from Aristotle's view to create an original vision of chance events. The introduction of the law, meanwhile, allows another ethical layer to unfold as the antagonist Smikrines invokes it for unjust ends. Through these two forces, Menander creates an ethical vision that resembles Peripatetic thought but then revises the Peripatetics to envision ethics through drama in his own way.

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