

Menander's Dyskolos: Originality and Creativity within the Conventions of New Comedy

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Abstract

Menander is one of the greatest playwrights of the Greek New Comedy. The style of New Comedy differs tremendously from that of Old Comedy as written by Aristophanes in the fifth century B.C. The political freedom and the freedom of speech even during the course of the Peloponnesian War allowed Aristophanes to openly satirize prominent figures. New Comedy in ancient Greece and Rome heavily relied on convention. Thus, the concept of originality, as might be an important criterion for some critics based on which to evaluate literary works, is not sought for in this context. The writers of New Comedy were well aware of the conventions and did their best to create variations on the same conventions. Meanwhile they tried to use their creativity to make their own mark on this highly conventional type of Comedy. This paper attempts to analyze Dyskolos by Menander within the convention of New Comedy and pinpoint Menander's creativity in injecting his creativity within that framework.

Keywords: Menander, Dyskolos, New Comedy, Conventions.