

This paper identifies topical allusions in *Dyskolos* allowing a reconstruction of Menander's political sympathies in 316, when the play was produced (Bod. Cod. *didaskalia*). Major (2004) and Iversen (2010) argue from external evidence that Menander was a supporter of Demetrius of Phalerum. In contrast, Lape (2004) has argued broadly that Menander's mixed-class marriages imply support for democratic egalitarianism and criticism of Demetrius' oligarchy. Following Lape, Sweet (2009) argues that *Dyskolos* promotes solidarity between rich and poor in a Macedonian controlled Athens. This paper seeks to advance the discussion with internal evidence alluding to the oligarchic restoration of 317, the new census requirement, and the violent trial that ended the oligarchy of 322-318. Allusions to these events suggest that Menander was making a case for the new regime.

Both of *Dyskolos*' "poor" characters, Knemon and Gorgias, would have retained the franchise under the new oligarchy. Knemon's net worth of two talents met the 1,000-drachma requirement twelve times over. Even Gorgias' small estate, supporting three adults, was likely worth twice this amount (Casson 1976). *Contra* Lape, the marriages between these families and the wealthy family of Sostratos did not indicate support for egalitarianism *per se*, because the marriages did not involve disenfranchised Athenians, who comprised about 20% of the δῆμος (Jones 1957; Hansen 1986). Menander promotes ἐπιμέλεια, instead of egalitarianism, as the basis for community solidarity. Ἐπιμέλεια regulated relationships between unequals, thus offering a conceptual basis for citizen solidarity under oligarchy. The poet introduces the concept in the prologue, when Pan notes that he will take care (ἐπιμέλειαν σχεῖν) of Knemon's daughter since she has carefully (ἐπιμελῶς) worshipped him (36-39). The value is specially associated with Sostratos, who characterizes his successful wooing of Knemon's daughter as a result of ἐπιμέλεια (862-863). But ἐπιμέλεια must also allude to Demetrius of Phalerum, Athens' new Ἐπιμελητής (Tracy 1995, 43-7). The poet thus reassures the δῆμος: Just as Sostratos, through ἐπιμέλεια, provides for the families of Gorgias and Knemon, so will the city's new Ἐπιμελητής treat the δῆμος well.

Wiles (1984) connected Knemon with the oligarchs Phocion and Demetrius. But Knemon is properly the descendant of Aristophanes' grumpy old democrats (e.g., Demos in *Knights*, a δύσκολον γερόντιον, 42). Menander also informs Knemon's anger with allusions to the mob at Phocion's trial two years earlier. Diodorus (18.66.4-67) and Plutarch (*Phocion*, 34.2-5) depict a mob turned beast, which showered verbal and physical abuse on the object of its hatred, descriptions that echo Menander's dramatization of Knemon's anti-social rage. Both Phocion's trial and the first performance of *Dyskolos* likely took place in the Theater of Dionysus (McDonald 1943, 44-61; Pickard-Cambridge 1968, pp. 39-42). The common venue would have facilitated an association between Knemon's rage and the mob that had recently condemned Phocion, a reenactment, as it were, at the scene of the crime. Finally, the abuse Knemon endured at the end of *Dyskolos* may be read both as poetic retribution for Phocion's murderers, and a warning not to resist the restored oligarchy.