

This paper will show that Menander's *Dyskolos*, whose plot revolves around domestic issues of marriage and authority in the household, also comments on the sociopolitical fabric of the Athenian *polis* in the late 4th century. Handley has argued that Menandrian comedy is not topical and alludes to contemporary political events only in the most general way (Handley 1965, 3-9). Major finds Menander's concern with domestic matters to be tacitly pro-Macedonian (Major 1997, 51, 58, 63). Lape, however, reacts against the earlier claims that Menander is nonpolitical by showing that Menandrian drama reflects the democratic culture of Athens in the Hellenistic period (Lape 2004, *passim*). This paper builds on Lape's work but focuses specifically on the importance of the recent foreign occupation of Athens to the political ideology implicit in the *Dyskolos*. In the year before Menander first put on the *Dyskolos*, the Macedonian Cassander installed Demetrios of Phaleron as viceroy of Athens and limited the franchise based on wealth (Habicht 1997, 52; Diodorus Siculus 18.74.3). The reconciliation that occurs within and between the two families in the *Dyskolos* also represents a reintegration into the social life of Athens of individuals who are marginalized because of the Macedonian interference. This approach explains the play's preoccupation with issues of wealth and solves some of the difficulties in interpreting the final act.

The internal or external changes experienced by the characters Gorgias, Knemon, and Sostratos have a clear sociopolitical dimension. Knemon and especially Gorgias, citizen farmers from the *deme* Phyle, where the democratic exiles gathered before attacking the Thirty Tyrants, exhibit some of the values traditionally esteemed among the Athenians. Gorgias, the poor and therefore disenfranchised young farmer, undergoes only an external change, since he is the prime exemplar of familial virtue in the play. This virtue, shown conspicuously toward his estranged step-father Knemon and half-sister, gains Gorgias reentry into their household and thus the wealth necessary for political participation and, in the end, marriage to Sostratos's sister. Knemon, the misanthrope for whom the play is named, eschews social interaction because he believes others are motivated solely by self-interest. Knemon takes this principled stand too far, but his complaints about excessive concern with profit resonate in a city where political rights are newly limited based on wealth. Although Knemon repents of his isolationist lifestyle after being saved by Gorgias, he only joins the party at the end of the play after being abused by two slaves, implying that participating in the social life of Athens while it is under Macedonian control is in some sense slavish. Sostratos experiences the most profound changes, both internal and external. He starts the play dressed as a rich city dweller and explicitly uses other characters for personal advantage. By the final act, he has changed both his costume and beliefs to more closely resemble Gorgias and, in so doing, has proved his worthiness to marry Knemon's daughter. Sostratos confirms that he has internalized the lessons learned from Gorgias by arguing to his father that wealth only has value when used to help others. The good effects on the other characters of association with Gorgias show that he should not be excluded from full citizenship. Through the union of rich with poor and city with country, Menander represents a healing of the divisions created at Athens as Macedonia became the dominant power in Greece. He suggests that wider social and political participation is necessary for the health of the city and its citizens, yet does not disguise that in an occupied state this can require a compromise of one's principles.