Four Plays of Menander

Four Plays of Menander: The Hero, Epitrepontes, Periceiromene and Samia

Menander 1910

Menander’s plays are significant for several reasons. They are important examples of New Comedy, a genre that flourished in Greece and Rome. This collection brings together the greatest works of Classical comedy, with two plays attributed to Aristophanes and two to Menander. The plays are presented in an edition adapted to the needs of modern students, providing a consecutive text by using surviving words in the damaged papyri. The translations are designed for English-speaking students reading it in Greek.

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Behind the Mask-Angela M. Hoap 2019-06-13 This new study of Menander casts fresh light not only on the techniques of the playwright but also on the literary and historical contexts of the plays. Menander (342/1-292/1 BCE) wrote over a hundred popular comedies, several of which were adapted by Plautus and Terence. Through them, he was a major influence on Shakespeare and Molière. However, his work survived only in excerpts and quotation until some significant texts reappeared in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on papyrus. The mystery of their loss and rediscovery has raised key questions surrounding the transmission of these and other Greek texts. Theatrical masks from the fourth century BCE discovered on the island of Lipari now also provide important material with which this book examines how the plays were originally performed. A detailed investigation of their historical setting is offered which engages with recent debates on the importance of social status and citizenship in Menander’s plays. The techniques of characterization are also examined, with particular focus on women, slaves and power relationships in his Epitrepontes. It appears that the audience was invited, sometimes subversively, behind the mask of this sophisticated comedy to discover that people do not always conform to literary expectations and social norms.

Menander: Samia-Matthew Wright 2020-11-12 Matthew Wright brings Menander’s Samia to life by explaining how it achieves its comic effects and how it fits within the broader context of fourth-century Greek drama and society. He offers a scene-by-scene reading of the play, combining close attention to detail with broader consideration of major themes, in an approach designed to bring out the humor and nuance of such individual moments on stage, while also illuminating Menander’s comic art. The play dramatizes a tangled story of mistakes, mishaps and misunderstandings leading up to the marriage of Moschion and Plangon. For most of the action the characters are at odds with one another owing to accidental delusions or deliberate deceptions, and it seems as if the marriage will be cancelled or indefinitely postponed; but ultimately everyone’s problems are solved and the play ends happily. Samia is one of the best-preserved examples of fourth-century Greek comedy: celebrated within antiquity but subsequently lost for many years, it miraculously came back to light, in almost complete form, as a result of Egyptian papyrus finds during the 20th century.