



Menander, Volume 1

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Menander, the dominant figure in New Comedy, wrote over 100 plays. By the Middle Ages they had all been lost. Happily papyrus finds in Egypt during the past century have recovered one complete play, substantial portions of six others, and smaller but still interesting fragments. Menander was highly regarded in antiquity and his plots, set in Greece, were adapted for the Roman world by Plautus and Terence. Geoffrey Arnott's new Loeb edition is in three volumes.

Volume I contains six plays, including the only complete one extant, *Dyskolos* (The Peevish Fellow), which won first prize in Athens in 317 BCE, and *Dis Expaton* (Twice a Swindler), the original of Plautus' *Two Bacchises*.

Volume II contains the surviving portions of ten Menander plays. Among these are the recently published fragments of *Misoumenos* ("The Man She Hated"), which sympathetically presents the flawed relationship of a soldier and a captive girl; and the surviving half of *Perikeiromene* ("The Girl with Her Hair Cut Short"), a comedy of mistaken identity and lovers' quarrel.

Volume III begins with *Samia* (The Woman from Samos), which has come down to us nearly complete. Here too are the very substantial extant portions of *Sikyonioidi* (The Sicyonians) and *Phasma* (The Apparition) as well as *Synaristosai* (Women Lunching Together), on which Plautus's *Cistellaria* was based. Arnott's edition of the great Hellenistic playwright has been garnering wide praise for making these fragmentary texts more accessible, elucidating their dramatic movement.

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