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themselves in grief, and Artemis took pity and transformed Meleager's mourning sisters, known as the Meleagrids, into guinea fowl.

The Homeric version of the story of Meleager, told by Phoenix in *Iliad* 9.529–599, includes no mention of the brand, the Moirae, or Atalanta. The Calydonians (called Aetolians) were aided in the boar hunt by their neighbors, the Curetes. Meleager killed the boar, and Artemis, who was still angry, caused a dispute over the animal's head and hide. War broke out, and Meleager killed his uncle and was cursed by his mother, who called on the gods to kill him. Enraged, he withdrew from the battle. Implored by the elders of Aetolia, his father, and Cleopatra to come to the city's rescue, Meleager finally rejoined the battle when the enemy was at the gates. Phoenix does not tell of the death of Meleager, but from other sources it appears that he was killed in battle by Apollo, who supported the Curetes.

Meleager, alone or with Atalanta, and the boar hunt have been popular subjects for painters and sculptors since at least the sixth century BCE. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the tale of Atalanta and Meleager captured the attention of artists such as Francesco Mosca, Jacob Jordaens, Bernard Picart, and Peter Paul Rubens.

[See also Jason and the Argonauts.]

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#### MENANDER

(342–292 BCE), New Comedy poet. Menander was one of the leading poets of New Comedy, together with Alexis, Apollodorus of Carystus, Diphilus, and Philemon. Not much is known of his life; most

sources are late, and there are no biographical references in his own writings. Menander was born at Athens in the deme Kephisia and died at about age fifty, allegedly while having a swim in the harbor of the Piraeus. He came from a good Athenian family and is said to have served as an ephebe together with Epicurus. Among his teachers are said to be the playwright Alexis and the philosopher Theophrastus (according to the *Suda*, Alexis was also Menander's uncle), and among his supporters are said to be Demetrius of Phaleron, who governed Athens from 317 to 307. The first performance of one of his plays was around the time of Alexander the Great's death, the play *Orgē* in 321/0. At the Lenaea of 316 he won the contest with the *Dyskolos* (likely his first victory), followed by another victory at the City Dionysia of 315.

**Plays.** Menander composed more than one hundred plays (the sources vary between 105 and 106), and the titles of ninety-six of them are known (the real number might be smaller because of double or alternate titles). At the end of antiquity all of Menander's work was lost. Revival started during the nineteenth century with the discovery of papyri in Egypt. In 1844 the first small fragments were found at Saint Catherine's monastery at Mount Sinai, in 1897 some eighty-seven lines of the *Geōrgos* were found, and in 1907 the Cairo papyrus with parts of the *Hērōs*, the *Epitrepontes*, the *Perikeiromenē*, and the *Samia* was published. In the second half of the twentieth century a sensational find was made on a papyrus belonging to the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana in Geneva, Switzerland (published first in 1959 and 1969). The Bodmer papyrus contains the *Dyskolos*, now the only entirely preserved play of Menander, and large parts of his *Samia* and *Aspis*. Many smaller fragments have added to our knowledge of Menander's work; only the works of Homer and Euripides occur more often on papyri.

Of the following plays the whole or considerable parts are preserved: *Aspis* (*The Shield*), *Dyskolos* (*The Grouch*), *Epitrepontes* (*Men at Arbitration*), *Misoumenos* (*The Hated Man*), *Perikeiromenē* (*The Girl with Her Hair Cut Short*), *Samia* (*The Woman from*

*Samos*), and *Sikyonios/-oi* (*The Sicyonion/-s*). Smaller parts are known of the *Geōrgos* (*The Farmer*), *Hērōs* (*The Guardian Spirit*), *Kolax* (*The Flatterer*), and *Phasma* (*The Apparition*). The history of the transmission of Menander's plays in antiquity is still unclear. There is no proof of an Alexandrian edition, but the presence of detailed information like the plot summary (*hypothesis*), production notice, and list of actors on the Bodmer and Cairo papyri makes the existence of such an edition likely. We also know that Aristophanes of Byzantium wrote on Menander.

Before the papyri were found, knowledge of Menander's work was limited to more than nine hundred quotations by Stobaeus and others. Most of these citations have a moralizing tendency, such as the quotation by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:33 of a verse from the play *Thaïs*, "bad company corrupts good morals." There are also gnomic *monostichoi* (single lines) that are attributed to Menander but whose actual authorship is disputed. Menander is recorded as winning only eight victories in dramatic contests, and he seems to have been less popular in his lifetime than was his closest rival, the playwright Philemon (Aulus Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 17.4.1–4). The large number of papyri and citations, however, shows the popularity that Menander gained after his death and maintained until the end of antiquity. His plays may have been lost because they never became part of the curriculum of formal education. The small number of extant plays does not allow any judgment on Plutarch's remark (*Poetae Comici Graeci* 6.2, test. 103) that there was an inner development within Menander's oeuvre.

**Character.** Just as Old Comedy reflects the polis life of the Classical Age, New Comedy reflects the political changes that took place during the fourth century BCE. The retreat into the private led to new central themes and character roles. Menander's plays deal with "real life" family and domestic affairs, with husband and wife arguing about their child (*Epitrepontes*), with young men fighting about a hetaera (*Kolax*), or with a bad-tempered rustic refusing to marry his daughter to a rich young fellow from the city (*Dyskolos*). We find ordinary family

people, as well as soldiers, merchants, hetaerae, slaves, cooks, and parasites. The selection of professions shows an interest in those outside ordinary bourgeois life. Typical themes are love, friendship, marriage, money, and the conventions and constraints of society. At the heart of the dramatic plot is often a love story.

Menander's plays reveal a heightened interest in characterization, a concern that he shared with his contemporary the philosopher Theophrastus, a student of Aristotle, who wrote sketches of thirty different character types. Some of them—*agroikos* (rustic, boor), *apistos* (untrustworthy), *deisidaimōn* (pious), *kolax* (flatterer, parasite)—occur also as titles of plays ascribed to Menander (cf. also the *Dyskolos*). Typical of Menander's art of individual characterization is the realism with which he presents his figures. Many of them appear against their theatrical stereotype in a more sympathetic than derogatory light. Thus, for instance, in the *Aspis* we find the Phrygian slave Daos, who is faithful, intelligent, and witty; in the *Epitrepontes* we find the hetaera Habrotonon, who is full of dignity and grace; and in the *Sikyonios* we find the soldier Stratophanes, who appears as a faithful and honest lover.

The extant plays suggest that Menander observed a division of his plays into five acts (clearly evident in the *Dyskolos* and *Samia*). The chorus in New Comedy is no longer of dramatic importance. Thus there is no interaction between the chorus and the characters in Menander; the chorus is reduced to performing an entr'acte, dividing the different parts of the play. Menander does not show the same variety of meters found in Aristophanes and in later comedians like Plautus. He mostly uses iambic trimeters (which are said to be closest to normal speech), occasionally uses trochaic tetrameters, and very seldom uses iambic tetrameters, anapaests, and ithyphallics. The language skillfully mimics everyday speech, and characters are differentiated according to their styles of speaking, as when a rustic and a man from the city are distinguished in the *Dyskolos*. Prologues are often spoken by a divine or otherwise nonhuman speaker (Pan in the *Dyskolos*, Tyche in the *Aspis*). Sometimes

exposition is postponed (as in the *Aspis* and *Perikeiromenē*), both to heighten the interest of the audience and to display the ignorance of the characters, a technique already found in Aristophanes and Euripides. Scholars still debate the question of how consistently Menander observed the so-called three-actor rule.

**Afterlife and Influence on Later Comedy.** Already by the mid-third century BCE, Menander had become a classic whose plays were restaged and won prizes at the dramatic festivals. Several (lost) interpretations and commentaries by ancient scholars are attested. Before papyri were discovered, the Roman playwrights Plautus and Terence had been the major sources for reconstructing the plots of Menander's plays. Both used Menander and other poets of New Comedy as models for their own plays: Plautus for *Stichus* and *Bacchides*, Terence for *Adelphi*, *Andria*, *Eunuchus*, and *Heauton timōroumenos*. Terence seems to have had a special liking for the work of Menander, which he used for four of six plays. The question of how closely Roman comic playwrights followed Menander in their own plays, and so to what degree these are useful in restoring the plots of lost plays by Menander, is much debated. In only one instance can we compare a piece of Roman comedy with its source: namely, the sixty-some lines from Menander's *Dis exapatōn* (*Double Deceiver*), gathered from various smaller papyrus fragments, that correspond to lines 494–562 of Plautus' *Bacchides*. Comparison shows that although Plautus retained the central plot of Menander's play, he made some significant changes, not only in the title, the names of the characters, and the meter, but also in the structure of the play and the length of the individual acts.

Menander was much read and praised by such later authors as Ovid (*Amores* 1.15.17–18; *Tristia* 2.369–370), Quintilian (*Institutiones oratoriae* 1.8.7, 10.1.69), and Martial (5.10.7–10) and remained available until the end of antiquity. Beyond the plentiful papyrus fragments, more than seventy preserved portraits and illustrations of his plays on mosaics and wall paintings attest to Menander's popularity.

[See also Comedy, Greek, *subentry* New Comedy.]

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#### MENELAUS

See Atreus, House of.

#### MERCENARIES

From Homer (eighth century BCE) through the fifth century BCE, the Greek word *epikouroi* (helpers) was used to describe any kind of foreign soldier brought in to help fight a war. This Greek term could include