

SERENA S. WITZKE : **Gendered Differences in the Recognition Plot: Menander's *Sikyonioi***

This essay argues that character development and self-understanding in Menander's recognition plots are reserved for men characters: women characters show resolve, but do not develop. Menander's recognition plot is thus gendered – most observably in *Sikyonioi*, the only play to show recognitions of an unrelated man and woman in the same play. In this play, a young woman, Philoumene (kidnapped at an early age), finds her father, while a mercenary soldier, Stratophanes, also discovers his true natal family and new role as an Athenian citizen; they marry, and Stratophanes' brother Moschion loses out. Philoumene protects her respectability, but is otherwise passive and never gains control over her own body. Once recognized by her father, she is engaged to Stratophanes, and her adventure ends. Stratophanes, by contrast, must overcome threats to his finances, identity, and love affair, developing into a responsible citizen. For him, the recognition plot is an adventure that does not end when he finds his parents. *Sikyonioi* also demonstrates that not everyone wins in the recognition plot: Moschion loses sexual object, sense of self, and status a sole heir. He is forced to develop through the limitations on his privilege. Moreover, the erotic competition highlights the passivity of Philoumene, who is not active participant in a love triangle, but prize. Because *Sikyonioi* highlights both gender disparity in the recognition plot and the positive and negative repercussions of the plot for male rivals, it is a crucial locus for anyone interested in gender relations in Menander.

**Mots-clés :**

New Comedy – Menander – *Sikyonioi* – gendering – recognition – *anagnorisis* – citizen – characterization – development – identity – competition