



**THE ATHENS GREEK RELIGION SEMINAR, Tuesday November 29, 2022,**

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***Methodological Prolegomena towards Re-examining the Place of Religion in New Comedy***

**ABSTRACT**

It is imperative to re-examine the relationship between New Comedy and religion, doing away with the fallacies (such as the ‘death of the polis’) and methodological errors that render the only comprehensive study on the subject (L. Gil, *Cuadernos de filología clásica* 1, 1971, 109-178) obsolete. The religiosity reflected in Menander’s plays is not ‘new’; it displays essential continuity with the classical world. Since New Comedy aspires to be a κάτοπτρον βίου, the representation of the characters’ religious experience is part and parcel of its agenda. But how can a comedy be ‘the mirror or life’ if a god secures the positive outcome from the start or if its happy end justifies the ideological structures of Athenian patriarchy by presenting them as natural, ‘automatic’, and eternal? This paper attempts briefly to sketch how Menander exploits the supernatural as a dramaturgical instrument to create various effects of ideological irony.

The seminar takes place **Tuesday November 29, 2022, 17.00 (Athens time)** with live presence at the Swedish Institute or via zoom link.

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