

A MENANDRIAN CRUX

... καιρός ἐστὶν ἡ νόσος
ψυχῆς· ὁ πληγεὶς δ' † εἴσω δὴ † τιτρώσκεται

(fr. 791, 7–8 K.-A.)¹

οὖν ἐκὼν (vel εἰς ἐκὼν) Post : εἰς ὅλην Pauw : εἰς ὃ δεῖ Wyttenbach :
εἰς ὅδι Hermann : ἔνδοθεν D'Orville : αὐτόθεν Meineke : εἴσεθ' ἦ
Wilamowitz : οἶδεν ἦ Papabasilieiu : εἰσβολῆ Bentley : εὐστοχία
Jacobs : εἰκαίαν Edmonds : εἰς ἀκμὴν Sandbach : εἴσω δὴ Xylander
suppl. e Stob. : ε (tum lac. 6–7 litt. in Plut. Amat. 763B).

This is a well-known crux in an intriguing Menandrian fragment² preserved wholly by Stobaeus (4.20.34 Hense, 444), who drew from Plutarch's Περὶ ἔρωτος (fr. 134 Sandbach, 81 [Teubner] / 250 [Loeb]), but, regarding the lines that interest us, also by Plut. Amatorius 763B.

To begin with, Stobaeus' reading (εἴσω δὴ) makes good sense, but is grossly unmetrical (iambic trimeter with five long syllables in a row). On the other hand,

1) R. Kassel / C. Austin (edd.), *Poetae Comici Graeci*, VI 2, Berlin / New York 1998, 378. Their informative crit. appar. refers us also to where the various emendations have been put forward and discussed. However, some of the conjectures I print above are not included in K.-A.

2) Here is our fragment in full:

τίνοι δεδούλωνται ποτε;
ὄψει· φλύαρος· τῆς γὰρ αὐτῆς πάντες ἄν
ἥρων· κρίσιν γὰρ τὸ βλέπειν ἴσην ἔχει.
ἀλλ' ἡδονὴ τις τοὺς ἐρώντας ἐπάγεται
συνουσίας; πῶς οὖν ἕτερος ταύτην ἔχων
οὐδὲν πέπονθεν, ἀλλ' ἀπήλθε καταγελῶν.
ἕτερος (δ') ἀπόλωλε; καιρός ἐστὶν ἡ νόσος
ψυχῆς· ὁ πληγεὶς δ' † εἴσω δὴ † τιτρώσκεται.

in Plut. Amat. 763B there is a lacuna of 6 or 7 letters after δ' (see Hubert's [Teubner] crit. appar., and Hense above, 445). From the conjectures that have been made to fill the gap in the *Amatorius* and emend Stobaeus' corrupt reading, those of Bentley, Jacobs, Edmonds and Sandbach might, perhaps, cautiously be set aside, on the ground that the words εἰσβολή (and the verb εἰσβάλλω), εὐστοχία, εἰκαίος / εἰκαία, and ἀκμή are not to be found elsewhere in Menander.³ The rest are equally, more or less, acceptable, but I intend to argue, by adducing some new evidence, that Post's suggestion is far more plausible.

In the first place, Post believes that "εἶσω δὴ is almost certainly a misreading of ἐκὼν written in uncials", and proposes οὖν ἐκὼν to fill the lacuna (p. 217).⁴ Since falling in love is a matter of timing (καιρός), it follows (οὖν) that the man smitten by eros is so conditioned at that particular moment that he promptly lets himself (he practically decides to) fall in love. Secondly, Sandbach, despite his own proposition (for details see his Loeb crit. appar., 250), seems also to approve of Post's alternative suggestion εἰς ἐκὼν; for he quotes both his translation ("the one man smitten is wounded of his own free will") and his reference to Augustine (*City of God* 12.6), "who proves, by using the same argument, as is found here, that falling in love is a matter of free will."⁵ This suggestion, however, is somewhat problematic. True, the same numeral is also included in Hermann's emendation (εἰς ὀδί), and is actually found in Amat. 763B (πολλοὶ ... τὸ αὐτὸ κάλλος ὀρώσι, εἴληπται δ' εἰς ὁ ἐρωτικός); but whereas εἰς in the cases above is syntactically and stylistically impeccable, Post's πληγείς δ' εἰς is not only a κακόζηλον, but also at variance with his translation, which apparently disregards the predicative function of the numeral here.⁶ The virtue of Post's emendation certainly – and primarily – lies in ἐκὼν, which introduces the factor of willingness (or free will) as a prerequisite of falling in love. Yet to highlight this factor and thus endorse the emendation above, one need not go as far as to the fifth century A. D.; for much closer to Menander's age a passage of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (a work sharing, at least partly, the same 'romantic' flavour with the New Comedy), discusses love in a way very similar to that of the Menandrian fragment some 60 years later. Unlike fire which burns everyone alike, Araspas explains to Cyrus, love does not have the same sweeping effect, but people may or may not fall in love and, if they do, one loves one and another another; for love is a matter of free will (ἐθελούσιον ... ἐστί), and each one loves whomever he wishes.⁷

3) Cf. G. Pompella, *Lexicon Menandream*, Hildesheim / Zürich / New York 1996, svv. The rejection, however, ought to be cautious, because Menander's extant works represent only a small part of his literary output. Further, to be entirely precise, the word ἀκμή seems to occur (*Sententiae* 92 Jaekel – but if, of course, *Sent.* 92 comes from Menander), but in the sense of 'youth' (compared to an ἄνθος).

4) L. A. Post, *Review of A. Koerte, Menandri quae supersunt. Pars altera: Reliquiae apud veteres scriptores servatae*, *AJPh* 77, 1956, 214–218.

5) See especially his Loeb edition of Plutarch's fragments (F. H. Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia XV*, London / Cambridge MA 1969, 251, note a). Unfortunately, however, Sandbach gives no reference to Post.

6) I owe this observation to the anonymous referee of the *RhM*.

7) Cf. *Cyr.* 5.1.10: ... τῶν δὲ καλῶν τῶν μὲν ἐρῶσι τῶν δ' οὐ, καὶ ἄλλος γε ἄλλου. ἐθελούσιον γάρ, ἔφη, ἐστί, καὶ ἐρᾷ ἕκαστος ὃν ἂν βούληται. And a bit further (5.1.11): τὸ δ' ἐρᾶν ἐθελούσιον ἐστί· ἕκαστος γοῦν τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐρᾷ, ὡς περ ἱματίων καὶ ὑποδημάτων. Cf. also 5.1.12.

Similarly, Menander affirms (see n. 2) that what enslaves men to women can be neither their looks (for in this case, given that the judgement of the eyes is impartial, everyone would love the same woman) nor sexual pleasure (since, lying with the same woman, one is not particularly moved and even ridicules her charms, whereas another is ruined by them);⁸ it is only a matter of occasion linked with one's inner condition and the right time,⁹ and whoever is struck by eros gets wounded of his own accord, in other words, chooses to fall in love.¹⁰

This brief comparative analysis manifests that the mind of the two passages, as regards the nature of the erotic experience, is very similar. Falling in love is a voluntary business, depending on each one's predilections (see esp. Cyr. 5.1.11 in n. 7), but also linked with the right timing. With ἐκὼν in the Menandrian lacuna (the counterpart of ἐθέλουσιον in Xen. Cyr.), therefore, this similarity is invigorated, becomes more palpable, and perhaps renders our crux redundant.¹¹