

# Isocrates and Menander in Late Antique Perspective

*Peter van Minnen*

A LATE ANTIQUE POEM OF DIOSCORUS in iambic trimeters uses Isocrates and Menander as models of rhetorical skill. Interest in the *Nachleben* of both Isocrates and Menander has unduly neglected this poem, which offers the only ancient association of these writers.<sup>1</sup> Even its initial editor scorned the poem,<sup>2</sup> and his successors have dealt with the text in a far from satisfactory manner. I shall present the Greek text, some textual notes, and a translation, before discussing the poem in greater detail and addressing a more general issue, its literary-critical *Sitz im Leben*.

*P.Rein.* II 82 is part of a papyrus from the archive of the well-known sixth-century notary public Dioscorus of Aphrodito, in Middle Egypt, who has recently been the subject of a full-fledged monograph<sup>3</sup> and whose poetry and personality continue to interest scholars.<sup>4</sup> The papyrus contains two columns with poems on an official called Romanus, one in iambic trimeters (*P.Rein.* II 82) and one in hexameters (*P.Lit.Lond.* 98).<sup>5</sup> Dioscorus wrote them in his own hand, as is clear from the prose header: Διοσκόρου ἀπὸ Θηβαίδος ἐγ[κώ]μια εἰς τὸν κύριον [Ῥ]ωμανόν. This is the only time that Dioscorus refers

<sup>1</sup> In Aelius Theon's catalogue of classical authors (*Progymnasmata* p.68 Spengel) Menander and Isocrates appear in succession.

<sup>2</sup> P. COLLART, ed., "Les papyrus Théodore Reinach," *BIFAO* 39 (1940: hereafter 'Collart') 19–22, with an unusually sharp introductory statement.

<sup>3</sup> L. S. B. MACCOULL, *Dioscorus of Aphrodito: His Work and His World* (Berkeley 1988: hereafter 'MacCoull'), whose discussion of Dioscorus' poetry (57–146) is the core of the book. For some criticisms, see the review by E. Wipszycka, *BibO* 48 (1991) 529–36.

<sup>4</sup> Several dissertations on his poetry are in progress.

<sup>5</sup> C. A. KUEHN, "Dioskoros of Aphrodito and Romanos the Melodist," *BASP* 27 (1990: hereafter 'Kuehn') 103–07, argues an identification of the addressee of the poem with the writer of hymns, a view also proposed by R. J. Schork (Kuehn 107 n.24). For a rejection of this identification see the Appendix (97f *infra*).

to himself in the headers of his poems. The first fourteen iambic trimeters form an acrostic: ὁ κύριος Ῥωμανός. They are followed by four more lines. The text of the first fourteen lines according to the latest, authoritative edition is as follows:<sup>6</sup>

- ὄλβιε πανόλβιε τῷ γένει κ[α]ὶ τοῖς λόγοις,  
 κάλλιστά σοι πρέπει· δέχο[υ], ὦ δέσποτα·  
 ὑμῶν τὰς ἀξίας λέγειν οὐ β[ά]σκανος,  
 4 ῥήτωρ ἄριστος εἰ μὴ εὐφυῆς πάνυ,  
 [ι.....] λογισμὸν ἀκριβῆ  
 [ο]τ[α] [ ]σινωεπεετ[.....]ε [ ]την  
 [σο]φὸς παλαιὸς ὦ Μένανδρος τοῖς λόγοις  
 8 [ρ.]μην Μενανδρείαν Ἴσοκράτης λέγει.  
 [ω.]ε δὲ γ[ἀ]ρ ἡμῖν ἢ πόλις σωφροσύνης.  
 [μ.]εδων ἔπαινον τετελεσμένος φύσει  
 [ἄ]κριτος ἔφυς τὰ διπλᾶ τῶν ἀρετῶν,  
 12 [ν]εώτερος παν[έ]ντιμος τύχης [καὶ] γένους,  
 [ὀ]λβιοδαίμων ὁ δημοκηδεμὸν μέγας,  
 [σ]οφὸς σοφωτάτων ὑπερέβησα[ς λ]όγον.

### Textual Notes

5: The lacuna obviously contained a verb on which λογισμὸν ἀκριβῆ depends. In view of line 8 I would be tempted to supply [Ἴσοκράτης λέγει]. Dioscorus praises Romanus by comparing him with well-known figures from the Greek literary past—including, in what follows, Menander and Isocrates. In the hexameter poem (*P. Lit. Lond.* 98.4) Dioscorus compares Romanus to Homer: ἄλλον Ὅμηρον ἴδον. These are the only authors mentioned by name, and only in the case of the ἐγκώμιον for Romanus are they compared to the person who is the object of his praise. Dioscorus mentions Homer by name elsewhere only in *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67185 verso B 4 (Heitsch 146 no. 20).

8: [ρ.]μην: Collart did not notice the acrostic. His supplement at the beginning of this line ([γνώ]μην?) therefore cannot be right. Of the supplements in Heitsch's apparatus—[ρύ]μην, [ρή]μην, and [ρώ]μην—only the last will do. There may be an additional pun on

<sup>6</sup> E. HEITSCH. *Die griechischen Dichterfragmente der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Göttingen 1961: hereafter 'Heitsch') 141 no. 12 (=MacCoull 68), 142 no. 12B (poem in hexameters).

Romanus' name.<sup>7</sup> It is extremely odd to find ῥώμη ascribed to Menander, as the reading of the successive editors implies. T. Gagos points out to me, however, that instead of Μενανδρείαν we should read μὲν ἀνδρείαν. The adjective ἀνδρείαν is well suited to [ῥώ]μην. With μὲν ἀνδρείαν Dioscorus may of course have intended an additional pun on Menander mentioned in the preceding line.

9: [ω̣ ]ε: Collart indicated three letters missing at the beginning of this line. The *omega* is a broad character and allows space for only one more letter. Thus only [ὦδ]ε is a possible reading. Although ὦδε δὲ γάρ sounds awkward, there can be no objection to ὦδε δέ, as such a combination occurs frequently at the beginning of a Homeric hexameter. The following γ[ά]ρ might be a misreading for π[α]ρ' but this is not really necessary.

10: [μ̣ ]εδων: For the beginning of this line [μελ]εδών seems likely; cf. the last line of the hexameter poem (*P. Lit. Lond.* 98.20): ἀγλαίην ἐνίκησας ἐρωτοτόκου μελεδῶνος, where μελεδών refers to Aphrodite.<sup>8</sup> It is possible to construe a satisfactory sentence with μελεδών by assuming that ἐπαινὼν is either an editorial or scribal mistake for ἐπαίνων, or more likely a relational accusative depending on μελεδών. The resulting phrase, μελεδῶν ἔπαινον (or ἐπαίνων), should be interpreted as "one who takes care of (speeches of) praise." It cannot be excluded that [μελ]εδών serves as the phonetic equivalent of [μελ]ετῶν. In that case ἔπαινον can of course be retained as an ordinary objective accusative.

We can now recast the Greek text in a more appropriate form:<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> As suggested by T. Viljamaa, *Studies in Greek Encomiastic Poetry of the Early Byzantine Period* (Helsinki 1968) 83, who believes that Dioscorus often plays with the name of the dedicatee, e.g., *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67131 verso B (Heitsch 140 no. 10B=MacCoull 77), where at line 9 Θεοῦ δῶρον seems indeed to be a pun on the name of the well-known count Theodorus, the probable dedicatee of the poem.

<sup>8</sup> At least in MacCoull's translation (70). Kuehn (106f) independently suggests reading [μελ]εδών in line 10 but thinks μελεδωνός a better reading for the last line of the hexameter poem. I consider μελεδῶνος preferable, as the adjective μελεδωνός referring to Romanus would require an object, and I see no problem in taking μελεδών as "the embodiment of care" or "a person who embodies care."

<sup>9</sup> I have made some changes in punctuation. The trace seen by Collart at the beginning of line 6 must have been the *omicron*. Heitsch prints [ο].

- ὄλβιε πανόλβιε τῷ γένει κ[α]ὶ τοῖς λόγοις,  
 κάλλιστά σοι πρέπει· δέχο[υ], ὦ δέσποτα.  
 ὑμῶν τὰς ἀξίας λέγειν οὐ β[ά]σκανος.
- 4 ῥήτωρ ἄριστος εἰ μὴ εὐφυῆς πάνυ·  
 [Ἴσοκράτης λέγει] λογισμὸν ἀκριβῆ.  
 οὔτ[α] [ ]σινωπεε ετ[ ]ε[ ] την  
 [σο]φὸς παλαιὸς ὦ Μένανδρος τοῖς λόγοις.
- 8 [ῥώ]μην μὲν ἀνδρείαν Ἴσοκράτης λέγει·  
 [ὦδ]ε δὲ γ[ὰ]ρ ἡμῖν ἡ πόλις σωφροσύνης.  
 [μελ]εδὼν ἔπαινον τετελεσμένος φύσει,  
 [ἄ]κριτος ἔφυς τὰ διπλᾶ τῶν ἀρετῶν,
- 12 [ν]εώτερος παν[έ]ντιμος τύχης [καὶ] γένους,  
 [ὀ]λβιοδαίμων ὁ δημοκιδεμῶν μέγας.  
 [σ]οφὸς σοφωτάτων ὑπερέβησα[ς] λ]όγον.

### Translation<sup>10</sup>

Blessed in every respect, blessed with a pedigree and intelligence, you deserve the best: here you are, Sir. It does not hurt to speak about your qualities. [4] You are an excellent, not to say highly talented, speaker: Isocrates presenting a careful argument! . . . . [8] You are Menander, wise man of old, in your intelligence! Isocrates speaking with manly power! For that makes our city a city of wisdom. A natural talent in delivering speeches of praise, you are beyond criticism on account of a double portion of virtues: [12] as a young man you are honored by all because of your fortune and pedigree, and as the great protector of the people you are truly blessed. Your intelligence has surpassed that of the wisest men.

### Commentary

1: ὄλβιε: MacCoull (70) refers *inter alia* to the famous late antique tapestry from Egypt, now at Dumbarton Oaks, representing 'Ἐστία πολύολβος. The vocative πανόλβιε only occurs three times in John Chrysostom. The adjective πανόλβιος is very rare.

<sup>10</sup> See MacCoull 69 for an entirely different translation.

2: δέχο[υ]: Dioscorus offers his poem to Romanus after first establishing that Romanus deserves only the best. The implication is that Dioscorus' poetry is the best of its kind.

3: οὐ β[ά]σκανος: Properly speaking βάσκανος is an adjective. MacCoull's translation implies reading βασκάνοις instead: "it is not for the envious to recite your worth." I think Dioscorus uses βάσκανος here as a neuter substantive with the sense of βασκανία. In Eusebius (*On Isaiah* II 52.110 Ziegler) βάσκανος is mentioned on a par with φθόνος and πρόφασις, and seems to function there as an abstract vice rather than to refer to a person who is βάσκανος. John Chrysostom always uses βασκανία in his catalogues of vices.

To the ancient mind excessive praise was dangerous and might tempt the evil eye. Even today in the Mediterranean it is considered suspect to pay too much attention to something that is dear to someone else. This topos of envy occurs quite frequently in ancient art and literature.<sup>11</sup> Cf. also φεύγεο, βασκανίη in another poem by Dioscorus (*P.Cair.Masp.* III 67318.23 [Heitsch 148f no. 23]).

4: ῥήτωρ ἄριστος: In this and the following lines Dioscorus does not use the vocative as he did in lines 1f.

5: εἰ μὴ εὐφύης: The adjective is here used in the sense of "talented." Cf. e.g. the combination ἄνδρα λέγειν μὲν οὐκ εὐφυῶ at Aeschin. 1.181. It occurs in late antique documents from Egypt as well, some of them by Dioscorus; see *P.Lond.* V 1678.3 and *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67295 I 17: ἡ περὶ τοὺς λόγους [εὐφυία. In the latter text the editor's supplement is ingenious.

I have kept εἰ μὴ together, although εἰ, μὴ is conceivable. But in that case μὴ should have the force of οὐ μόνον, which is odd. It seems better to assume here a logical inconsistency on the part of Dioscorus. We would have expected him to say: "You are a highly talented speaker, not to say the best!"

5: ἀκριβῆ: Isocratean ἀκρίβεια is also mentioned in Romanus the Sophist's *Περὶ ἀνειμένου* 2.<sup>12</sup>

7: ὦ Μένανδρος: One is reminded of the famous saying of Aris-

<sup>11</sup> See K. M. D. Dunbabin and M. W. Dickie, "Invidia rumpantur pectora. The Iconography of Phthonos/Invidia in Graeco-Roman Art," *JAC* 26 (1983) 7-37 (I owe this reference to G. Schwendner).

<sup>12</sup> W. Camphausen, *Romani Sophistae Περὶ ἀνειμένου* (= *Rhetores Graeci* XIII [Leipzig 1922]), who dates this Romanus to the fifth or sixth century. This work is not listed in L. Berkowitz and K. A. Squitier, *Canon of Greek Authors and Works*<sup>3</sup> (New York 1990).

tophanes of Byzantium: ὁ Μένανδρε καὶ βίε, πότερος ἄρ' ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο;<sup>13</sup>

8: [ῥώ]μην: Cf. Pl. *Phdr.* 267A: ῥώμην τοῦ λόγου (of Gorgias)<sup>14</sup> and *Leg.* 711E: τῆ τοῦ λέγειν ῥώμη. Cf. also Cratinus *minor* 7.3 Kock: τῆς τῶν λόγων ῥώμης. For the combination of ῥώμη and the adjective ἀνδρεῖος see Hdt. 7.153. Not surprisingly ῥώμη and ἀνδρεία often occur in the same context in Greek literature of all sorts. At Isoc. *Evag.* 22f physical ῥώμη is linked with σωφροσύνη and ἀνδρεία; cf. *Nicoles* 3f: the linking of ῥώμη and ἀνδρεία.

9: πόλις σωφροσύνης: Dioscurus goes a step beyond the classical topos of a city governed by σωφροσύνη (e.g. Thuc. 8.64.5) in ascribing σωφροσύνη to the city at large on the basis of the political, i.e., rhetorical, activity of Romanus, the exemplary σῶφρων. It is not excluded that by using πόλις Dioscorus refers to some abstract 'community'.

11: [ἄ]κριτος: "Subject to no judge, beyond criticism" in a positive sense seems to be the only possible rendering. The adjective ἄκριτος is often used in Dioscorus' own notarial documents, but in most instances it has the meaning "not (yet) judged." Only in Aeschylus, *Supp.* 371, where the chorus addresses the king as πρῦτανις ἄκριτος, does the adjective seem to carry the same meaning as here. It is glossed ἀνυπεύθυνος in the scholia.

τὰ διπλᾶ: In this case Dioscorus uses a relational accusative with ἄκριτος in the same way as with μελεδῶν in the previous line. We find relational datives in lines 1 (τῷ γένει καὶ τοῖς λόγοις with ὄλβιε πανόλβιε), 7 (τοῖς λόγοις with σοφός), and 10 (φύσει with τετελεσμένος), and relational genitives in line 12 (τύχης καὶ γένους with πανέντιμος).

12: πανέντιμος: This adjective occurs in Greek literature only once in [J. Chrys.] *Vision of Daniel* p.35.10 Vassiliev. But cf. the use of this adjective in early eighth-century Greek documents from Egypt, such as *P.Apoll.* 52.2.

13: δημοκηδεμών: This word is not attested elsewhere, and the only other composite adjective with κηδεμών is φιλοκηδεμών at Xen. *Ages.* 11.13. In *P.Oxy.* I 41.12f a πρῦτανις at a public meeting is acclaimed τὸν

<sup>13</sup> This saying is included not as a fragment but among the testimonia (T7) in W. J. Slater, *Aristophanis Byzantii Fragmenta* (Berlin 1986).

<sup>14</sup> See V. Buchheit, *Untersuchungen zur Theorie des Genos Epideiktikon von Gorgias bis Aristoteles* (Munich 1960) 31f.

κηδεμόνα τῆ πόλι (πόλει).<sup>15</sup> For κηδεμών in the archive of Dioscorus see also *P.Lond.* V 1676.20.<sup>16</sup>

From the translation it is clear that Dioscorus is praising a professional speech writer in his community. This radically changes MacCoull's interpretation of lines 4f and 7f.<sup>17</sup> Lines 4f and 7f are in fact directed to Romanus, who is addressed as the best orator around, a new Isocrates, a new Menander, and again as a new Isocrates.<sup>18</sup> When Romanus speaks everyone has to admit that "He is like Isocrates presenting a detailed argument, he is like Menander stating general truths, and again he is like Isocrates speaking powerfully!" Romanus seems to have been an important man in late antique Egypt. Although we cannot identify him with any person known from other texts (see Appendix), we may safely assume that Romanus is an official in the Egyptian bureaucracy. His sphere of influence may have extended beyond Aphrodito to the whole of the Thebaid. For all we know, he may have been resident in Antinoöpolis, where Dioscorus lived for several years after 565 (MacCoull 11–14).

It is useful to point out, as others have done before, that Dioscorus owned a copy of an anonymous biography of Isocrates (*P.Cair.Masp.* II 67175)<sup>19</sup> and was the original owner of the Cairo codex of Menander. But these facts, in combination with the above reconstruction of the poem on Romanus, demand a fresh investigation into the reception of Isocrates and Menander in late antiquity. What possible use can Dioscorus have made of the codex of Menander? How did Dioscorus perceive Isoc-

<sup>15</sup> On this text see also M. Blume, "À propos de *P.Oxy.* I, 41. Des acclamations en l'honneur d'un prytane confrontées aux témoignages épigraphiques du reste de l'empire," in *Egitto e storia antica dall'ellenismo all'età araba* (Bologna 1989) 271–90, especially 283ff on κηδεμών.

<sup>16</sup> On δημοκηδεμών see now also the remarks of A. Saija, *AnalPap* 1 (1989) 53.

<sup>17</sup> "Menander, the ancient thinker, (might have [framed an accurate speech about you]) in his sayings, and Isocrates (would have) echoed Menander." Line 6 seems beyond repair.

<sup>18</sup> The word "new" is not actually used, although Dioscorus elsewhere occasionally uses νέος in this connection (e.g. *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67315 verso 59: a high official hailed as the new Solon) or ἄλλος (Romanus as the second Homer: *supra* 88).

<sup>19</sup> Not at all a school text, as R. A. Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Greco-Roman Egypt* (Ann Arbor 1965) 113 no. 2080, suggests.

rates? What qualities did he admire most in the work of the Attic orator and comedian?

The answer to the last question seems fairly simple: Dioscorus admired Isocrates' ῥώμη ἀνδρεία and regarded Menander as a σοφὸς παλαιός. In the following I shall limit myself to the implications of Dioscorus' use of these two points of literary reference and their presentation.

Menander was highly valued by such writers of rhetorical handbooks as Quintilian, and not without reason. Unfortunately, so far as I know, only the arbitration scene in the *Epitrepontes* has been subjected to a more or less thorough rhetorical analysis.<sup>20</sup> As I shall point out elsewhere in greater detail,<sup>21</sup> this scene must have been highly valued in late antiquity as reading material for all those involved in civil judication, e.g., a notary such as Dioscorus (who alone transmits the text of this part of the *Epitrepontes*), because of the increased popularity of all forms of private arbitration and arbitration by (semi-)officials in late antique Egypt—and presumably elsewhere. An obvious difference between the texts of the classical Greek orators of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. and the arbitration scene in the *Epitrepontes* is precisely that the former were originally directed to an audience of up to several hundred judges, whereas the latter was directed in the first instance to a single individual acting as judge (Cohoon 229). This alone makes the arbitration scene suitable for training in rhetorical technique in the whole of postclassical antiquity.

At *Inst.* 10.1.69–71, Quintilian refers to just this aspect of Menander's work; in fact *Epitrepontes* is the first comedy of Menander that he mentions by name:

*hunc (scil. Euripides) et admiratus maxime est, ut saepe testatur, et secutus, quamquam in opere diverso, Menander, qui vel unus meo quidem iudicio diligenter lectus ad cuncta quae praecipimus effingenda sufficiat: ita omnem vitae imaginem expressit, tanta in eo inveniendi copia et eloquendi facultas, ita est omnibus rebus personis adfectibus accommodatus. [70] nec nihil profecto viderunt qui orationes quae Charisi nomine eduntur a Menandro scriptas putant. sed mihi longe magis*

<sup>20</sup> J. W. COHOON, "Rhetorical Studies in the Arbitration Scene of Menander," *TAPA* 45 (1914: hereafter 'Cohoon') 141–230.

<sup>21</sup> P. van Minnen and T. Gagos, *Settling a Dispute: Towards a Legal Anthropology of Late Antique Egypt* (forthcoming).



*orator probari in opere suo videtur, nisi forte aut illa<sup>22</sup> iudicia quae Epitrepontes, Epicleros, Locroe habent, aut meditationes in Psophodee, Nomothete, Hypobolimaeanon omnibus oratoris numeris sunt absolutae. [71] ego tamen plus adhuc quiddam conlaturum eum declamatoribus puto, quoniam his necesse est secundum condicionem controversiarum plures subire personas,<sup>23</sup> patrum filiorum<sup>24</sup> maritorum militum rusticorum divitum pauperum irascentium deprecantium mitum asperorum, in quibus omnibus mire custoditur ab hoc poeta decor.*

It is also important to take into account what Quintilian has to say in the passage just prior to this. He is commenting on Euripides, but the qualities he underscores are also to be found in Menander, at least if we take seriously the statement of 68:<sup>25</sup>

*namque is (scil. Euripides) et sermone ... magis (scil. than Sophocles) accedit oratorio generi, et sententiis densus, et in iis quae a sapientibus tradita sunt paene ipsis par, et in dicendo ac respondendo cuilibet eorum qui fuerunt in foro disertum comparandus, in adfectibus vero cum omnibus mirus, tum in iis qui miseratione constant facile praecipuus.*

With *et sententiis densus, et in iis quae a sapientibus tradita sunt paene ipsis par* we go a step further in establishing the suitability of Menander as a model for late antique rhetorical practice. Dioscorus highlights this aspect when he calls Menander a σοφὸς παλαιὸς τοῖς λόγοις. Previous editors have seen in these words a reference to the collection of so-called *Sayings*

<sup>22</sup> Some manuscripts add *mala* here to balance *absolutae*. Either way the admission introduced by *nisi* is ironical. Menander's arbitration scene in the *Epitrepontes* may not be perfect in all rhetorical respects—but who would expect that in a comedy anyhow?

<sup>23</sup> A reference to the ἠθοποιία of Menander. Literary critics, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, stressed this aspect of his work. The relevant testimonies are conveniently collected in Koerte's Teubner edition of Menander (II nos. 32–49). For discussions see A. Garzya, "Menandro nel giudizio di tre retori del primo impero," *RivFil* 37 (1959) 237–52 (besides Quintilian and Dionysius he deals with Dio Chrysostom); F. H. Sandbach, "Menander's Manipulation of Language for Dramatic Purposes," in *Ménandre (=Entretiens Hardt* 16 [Vandoeuvres/Geneva 1970]) 113–36, who echoes the ancient critics.

<sup>24</sup> I see no reason to insert <*caelibum*> here. Quintilian need not have presented all the various *personae* in pairs.

<sup>25</sup> Dio Chrysostom (18.6) also mentions Menander and Euripides in the same breath.

of Menander.<sup>26</sup> The wide circulation of this collection in late antique Egypt is attested by a bilingual Greek-Coptic version.<sup>27</sup> I think Dioscorus here refers rather to the sententiousness of the whole of Menander's work, not just of his collected *Sayings*. Dioscorus nowhere uses a saying from the collection.

Finally we have to address the particular suitability of Isocrates, of all classical orators, as a reference point for Dioscorus' praise of Romanus, especially the use of *ῥώμη* to describe Isocrates. For critics both ancient and modern Isocrates is an example of the so-called middle style,<sup>28</sup> whereas Demosthenes' work is more easily characterized by *ῥώμη*. For the writer of the tract *Περὶ ὕψους* (12.4), ὁ Κικέρων τοῦ Δημοσθένους ἐν τοῖς μεγέθεσι παραλλάττει. ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ὕψει τὸ πλεον ἄποτόμω, ὁ δὲ Κικέρων ἐν χύσει, καὶ ὁ μὲν ἡμέτερος διὰ τὸ μετὰ βίας ἕκαστα, ἔτι δὲ τάχους ῥώμης δεινότητος.

The single characteristic of Isocrates' work that distinguishes him from other classical orators is presumably his stress on careful reading of his work as argumentative texts by those already concerned with his views, rather than hearing him perform his speeches as part of a legal or political debate. Isocrates presents his arguments to an audience interested in his views on culture and politics. This is true of much of the public oratory of Dioscorus' time, which was largely epideictic in character and confined to *harangues d'apparat* in which one official praised another. This is also true of much of Dioscorus' own work as a notary public. The long legal documents, with their *narratio* of the case and their copious use of legal terminology, are addressed to individual parties to a legal dispute or the individual legatees of a will.

Dioscorus' originality lies in his bold application to Isocrates of a characterization (*ῥώμη*) usually reserved for Demosthenes. What to earlier Greek literary critics had seemed a characteristic of the one could well be applied to the other during a period in which the function of oratory had changed drastically—indeed,

<sup>26</sup> Teubner edition of the *Sententiae* by S. Jäkel (Leipzig 1964).

<sup>27</sup> See D. Hagedorn and M. Weber, "Die griechisch-koptische Rezension der Menandersentenzen," *ZPE* 3 (1968) 15–50; cf. M. S. Funghi, "PMil Vogliano inv. 1241 v.: γνώμαι μονόστιχοι," in *Miscellanea papyrologica in occasione del bicentenario dell'edizione della Charta Borgiana I* (Florence 1990) 181–88.

<sup>28</sup> For a recent summary see G. A. Kennedy, *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism I* (Cambridge 1989) 187: Isocrates is "a closet orator and the first example of the academic mind."

the distinctions preserved by Quintilian and Dio Chrysostom were anachronistic for their own day. In the final analysis Dioscorus ascribes ῥώμη ἀνδρεία to Isocrates because in late antique society epideictic oratory in the vein of Isocrates is seen to have power, to 'work', and because Isocrates rather than Demosthenes is the exemplary public figure, the 'right man', in Dioscorus' eyes. This is the meaning he ascribes to his value judgment, and that is what ultimately counts in his poem.

In conclusion, the neat structure of the acrostic should be noted. The poem divides into two sections of seven lines each—no doubt intentionally: the seven letters of ὁ κύριος form the first section, those of Ῥωμανός the second. The first and last lines of the first section both end in τοῖς λόγοις, just as the first and last lines of the second section end in λέγει and λόγον respectively. The last line of both sections begins with σοφός. The last line of the first section and the first line of the second section are connected by μέν and δέ, which is the only instance in the poem of two lines explicitly connected. We should be grateful to Dioscorus for putting his reading of Isocrates and Menander in such a pleasing form.<sup>29</sup>

#### APPENDIX: On the Proposed Identification of Romanus with the Melodist

Kuehn offers both external and internal arguments for identifying Romanus with the Melodist. His rather tenuous external argument (104)—that Dioscorus visited Constantinople at least once in Romanus the Melodist's lifetime—cannot stand. More important, all Dioscorus' other poems are addressed to local officials from the Thebaid, except for an occasional poem for Justin II and Dioscorus' unmistakable request for aid from Romanus suggests that he was also a local official. This request at lines 15f of the poem in iambic trimeters ([κ]αὶ μὴ κατόκνει συγκροτεῖν ξ[έ]νους ποτέ), immediately following the acrostic, is echoed by another poem addressed to a *praeses* of the Thebaid (*P. Cair. Masp.* II 67131 verso 19): νῦν μὴ κατόκνει συγκροτεῖν με δυστυχή.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Dioscorus is less successful in his prosody: many verses do not scan. Most often 'wrong', *i.e.*, non-classical, quantity accounts for the mistakes.

<sup>30</sup> Kuehn could in fact have used the existence of early copies of Romanus the Melodist's hymns on papyrus as an additional prop for his argument: see J. Van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Paris 1976) 252 no. 698 (of *ca* 600); T. F. Brunner, *ZPE* (forthcoming).

Kuehn's internal arguments (104f) are equally unconvincing. It is not surprising that Dioscorus and Romanus the Melodist, as contemporaries, both use acrostics in their poems. Indeed Romanus' reference to himself as ταπεινός and Dioscorus' description of the addressee of his hexameter poem as θαυμαστός should preclude an identification. Likewise Dioscorus' use of κύριος as a title of address and the occasional reference to Romanus the Melodist as κύριος is meaningless, as κύριος in late antique Greek denotes no more than 'Mister'. Further, the poem certainly concerns eloquence, but its concern for writing is not at all clear (Kuehn 105). Even if we concede this point, there is insufficient evidence for identifying the addressee of the poem with Romanus the Melodist; in this case the author of the Περὶ ἀνευμένου (*supra* n.12) could also be a candidate. Finally, Kuehn argues (107) that the concluding image of the poem in iambic trimeters (lines 17f, referring to the two tablets given to Moses by God) somehow relates to the possible Jewish extraction of Romanus. But these lines recur almost verbatim in another poem (*P. Cair. Masp.* II 67131 verso 17f=Heitsch 139 no. 10). Should we then also assume Jewish relations for the *praeses* of the Thebaid?

ANN ARBOR

July, 1992