

ΔΗΜΟΚΡΙΤΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΘΡΑΚΗΣ
ΣΧΟΛΗ ΚΛΑΣΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ
ΤΜΗΜΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
~ 20 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ~

ΤΑΥΤΟΤΗΤΕΣ: ΓΛΩΣΣΑ & ΛΟΓΟΤΕΧΝΙΑ

Πρακτικά Προσυνεδριακής Συνάντησης
Μεταπτυχιακών Φοιτητών και Υποψηφίων Διδασκόντων για
τα 20 χρόνια λειτουργίας του Τμήματος Ελληνικής
Φιλολογίας του Δ.Π.Θ.

Κομοτηνή, 8 Οκτωβρίου 2015



Επιμέλεια
Νίκος Μαυρέλος
Πολυξένη Συμεωνίδου

ΚΟΜΟΤΗΝΗ 2017



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Προσυνεδριακή Συνάντηση Μεταπτυχιακών Φοιτητών και Υποψηφίων Διδακτόρων
για τα 20 χρόνια λειτουργίας του Τμήματος Ελληνικής Φιλολογίας του Δ.Π.Θ.
Κομοτηνή, 8 Οκτωβρίου 2015

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Pre-Conference Meeting of Post-graduate Students and PhD Candidates on the
occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Department of Greek of D.U.Th.
Komotini, October 8, 2015

IDENTITIES: LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Επιμέλεια
Νίκος Μαυρέλος
Πολυξένη Συμεωνίδου

ΚΟΜΟΤΗΝΗ 2017

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THRACIAN OR ATHENIAN?
THE COMPLICATED IDENTITY OF MENESTHEUS, SON OF
IPHICRATES, IN
Nep. *Iph.* 3, 4

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Abstract

In the final chapter of Iphicrates' biography, Cornelius Nepos relates that Menestheus, son of Iphicrates by the daughter of Cotys, king of the Thracians, when he was asked whether he valued more of his father or his mother, suddenly answered that he praised his mother more, because the former had made him a Thracian, but the latter an Athenian. The aim of the paper is to clarify the meaning of this bizarre and apparently incoherent anecdote: firstly, by examining the various and problematic cultural identities of Iphicrates; then, by a closer analysis of Nepos' text and Menestheus' words.

Key-Words

Menestheus, Iphicrates, Cornelius Nepos, Mother, Identity

In the final chapter of Iphicrates' biography, Cornelius Nepos records an anecdote about Menestheus, the protagonist's son:

“Menesthea filium reliquit ex Thressa natum, Coti regis filia. Is cum interrogaretur, utrum pluris, patrem matremne, faceret, «matrem» inquit. Id cum omnibus mirum videretur, at ille «merito» inquit «facio: nam pater, quantum in se fuit, Threcem me genuit, contra ea mater Atheniensem».”¹

This episode seems to be preserved apparently only by Nepos:² the absence of any precise parallels and the oddity of the message made the excerpt quite difficult to explain at first. This paper aims to comprehend the meaning of Menestheus' words

¹ Nep. *Iph.* 3.4. The Latin text is that of the most recent critical edition: WINSTEDT (⁹1971); GUILLEMIN (³1970); MALCOVATI (³1964); MARSHALL (²1985).

² In Nep. *Iph.* 3, 2 Nepos quoted Theopompus as source, but it is not clear whether the Roman biographer used the Greek historians only for Iphicrates' portrait or, on the contrary, for the whole *Life*.

and to clarify a chapter that has often been overlooked by the most recent editors and interpreters of Nepos' biographies.³ Two different paths will be followed throughout this analysis: the first focused on the figure, sometimes enigmatic, of Iphicrates, the second based on a more precise reading of the chapter.

1. The identity of Iphicrates: Athens, Thrace, and Macedonia

In order to comprehend Menestheus' words, it is firstly necessary to study the complicated identity of his father. Iphicrates was born in Athens around 413 BC,⁴ apparently from a modest family.⁵ After playing a role during the Corinthian War,⁶ Iphicrates became a commander of the Athenian expedition sent to Egypt to support Pharnabazus II.⁷ There are no records about the ten years between the peace of Antalcidas and this latter military expedition. According to historians,⁸ during this period Iphicrates could have secured an alliance with the royal family of Thrace.⁹ However, the sources do differ about the identity of Iphicrates' wife: as shown before,

³ NIPPERDEY (1949), ANTHON (1858), and MONGINOT (1868) omitted to analyze the text. No notes also in AGNES (1977) and WIRTH (1994).

⁴ The date of birth could be inferred from Iust. 6.5.2-5 and Oros. *hist.* 3.1.21: they record that, after the Spartan victory at Coronea in 394, the Athenians sent the twenty-year-old Iphicrates to support the Boeotians with an army. Nevertheless this was not Iphicrates' "baptism of fire". According to Plut. *Mor.* 186f, Iphicrates' first important military action was during a sea battle, when he saved an enemy pulling him out of the water. Because the first attested military command of Iphicrates seemed to be the one after Coronea, historians think that the sea battle recorded by Plutarch was the battle of Cnidus of 394; cf. DAVIES (1971, 249); BIANCO (1997, 181).

⁵ According to Plut. *Mor.* 186f-187a, he was the son of a shoemaker, named Timotheus, as remembered by Paus. 9.14.6. Aristotle in *Rh.* 1.7.32; 1.9.31 and 2.23.8 reports that Iphicrates claimed to have reached important political positions from humble origins. This tradition, held to be true by DAVIES (1971, 248), was scaled down by BIANCO (1997, 180 n. 7), who, quoting D. 21.62 (where there is a reference to Iphicrates' prosperity), sustains that Iphicrates' family, although not noble, has the possibility to firstly introduce a son to a military career, then to the political world.

⁶ He fought both in the Peloponnesus (from 393 to 390) and in the Hellespont (from 389 to the peace of Antalcidas in 387/6). For a summary of his military actions, cf. the precise chronology of BIANCO (1997, 181-87). About the armistice known as "Peace of Antalcidas" or "King's peace", cf. LEVI (1955); AUCELLO (1955); BADIAN (1991); SCHMIDT (1993).

⁷ Regarding the size of this military expedition, cf. LLOYD (2006, 348-49); for a portrait of Pharnabazus II, cf. the entry by LENSCHAU (1938).

⁸ DAVIES (1971, 249); KALLET (1983, 242 and 245); BIANCO (1997, 186-88).

⁹ Xenophon in *An.* 4.8.26 records that, during Thrasybulus' expedition to the Hellespont in 390, Thrace seemed divided between Amadocus I (regarding Amadocus, cf. the entry by Judeich (1894)), king of the Odrysians (on this nation, cf. JORDANOV (1996); ARCHIBALD (1998)), and Seuthes II, the governor of the coastal regions. In 383/2 the kingdom seemed united under the control of Cotys I, who succeeded his father in that same year. At the end of the Corinthian War, Iphicrates was still in the Hellespont without any official role. For this reason he could have searched (and found) a military employment in the bordering regions, in particular in Thrace. BIANCO (1997, 187) affirms that Iphicrates could have played a part in the Thracian war, firstly in favour of Seuthes, then of Cotys, helping the two kings to prevail over the Odrysian dynasty. In exchange of this military support, Cotys could have offered him an alliance with a promise of marriage and the possession of a coastal city, probably Drys (cf. Theop. *FGrHist* 115 F 161 = Harpocr. s.v. Δρῶς. On Drys, cf. LOUKOPOULOU (2004, 878); BIANCO (1997, 187-88)).

Nepos sustains that the Athenian got married with a daughter of Cotys; the same information is recorded also by Seneca *Con.* 6.5 and Athenaeus 4.131a.¹⁰ This historical tradition, considered trustworthy by Kirchner (1901, 512) and Parke (1970, 56), has been rejected as a chronological mistake by Davies (1971, 249), Harris (1989, 267, n. 15), and Bianco (1997, 187-88, n. 28). In fact, the genealogy proposed by Nepos is in contrast with Demosthenes 23.129, where Iphicrates is called κηδεστής of Cotys: even though this word is used to determine both the brother-in-law and the father-in-law,¹¹ in Demosthenes' extract the family relation between Iphicrates and Cotys is compared to that between the Thracian king Cersobleptes and Charidemus: this last one was married to one of Cersobleptes' sisters.¹² Furthermore, in the same speech Demosthenes asserted that Cotys, in the year of his death (360 BC), seemed to have had very young sons.¹³ Without any new sources this problem will not have a definitive answer: the only certain fact is that Iphicrates' wife was a member of the Thracian royal family. The date of the marriage is also uncertain. Thanks to Isocrates 15.129, we can understand that Menestheus should have been elected στρατηγός approximately in 356/5 with his father Iphicrates and his father-in-law Timotheus¹⁴ during the battle of Embata.¹⁵ Supposing that the Athenian strategy could have been entrusted after the 30th birthday,¹⁶ the birth of Menestheus should have been dated at least in 385/6.¹⁷ For this reason, the marriage alliance between Iphicrates and the Thracian royal family could have taken place approximately around that same year. On that occasion Cotys could perhaps also have received the honour of the Athenian citizenship recorded by Demosthenes 23.118.¹⁸ Probably during his stay in Thrace, Iphicrates could have done business with the close reign of Macedonia. Aeschines

¹⁰ This extract is followed by a long fragment from Anaxandrides' *Protesilaus*, frg. 42 Kassel-Austin, where the Thracian marriage festivity of Iphicrates is ironically described.

¹¹ Cf. the entry in *LSJ*, 946.

¹² Cf. D. 23.129: “ἐγὼ σκοπῶ Κότυν, ὅτι κηδεστής ἦν Ἰφικράτει τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ὄνπερ Χαριδήμῳ Κερσοβλέπτης”. About this Thracian King, cf. the entry by KAHRSTEDT (1921); about Charidemus, cf. the note by KIRCHNER (1899).

¹³ Cf. D. 23.163: “τὸν μὲν γὰρ Κότυν, εἶ ποιωῶν, ὄντα γ' ἐχθρὸν ὑμῖν καὶ πονηρὸν ἀποκτίννυσιν ὁ Πύθων, ὁ δὲ Κερσοβλέπτης ὁ νυνὶ βασιλεύων μειρακύλλιον ἦν καὶ πάντες οἱ τοῦ Κότυος παῖδες”.

¹⁴ *Nep. Timoth.* 3.1. Cf. TOO (2008, 157).

¹⁵ One of the last episodes of the Social War, cf. D.S. 16.21.2-4; *Nep. Timoth.* 3.1-5; Polyæn. *strat.* 3.9.29; St. Byz. s.v. Ἐμβάτων.

¹⁶ Cf. PICCIRILLI (1988), especially, about Menestheus, pp. 183-84.

¹⁷ Cf. also DAVIES (1971, 249-50); BIANCO (1997, 188, n. 29).

¹⁸ Demosthenes recorded that the Athenians granted the Athenian citizenship to Cotys when the king's politics was very close to that of Athens: “ἵστε γὰρ δήπου πάντες, ὧ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοῦθ' ὁμοίως ἐμοί, ὅτι τὸν Κότυν ποτ' ἐκεῖνον ἐποιήσασθε πολίτην, δῆλον ὡς κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον εὐνοῦν ἡγούμενοι”.

2.28 wrote that Iphicrates was adopted by king Amyntas and that their friendship was behind the alliance between Amyntas and Athens.¹⁹ Because of this particular relationship the Athenians decided to send Iphicrates to Macedonia between 368 and 365/4. He had to conquer Amphipolis and to resolve the dynastic war that was dividing the kingdom after Amyntas III's death in 370/69.²⁰ However, the unsuccessful capture of Amphipolis seemed to have ruined the relationship between Iphicrates and his native land. In fact, the general was substituted by Timotheus in 365/4.²¹ After this change in command, Iphicrates came back to Cotys' court in 364. According to Demosthenes' *Against Aristocrates*, the Athenian general, during this second stay in Thrace, became commander of Cotys' navy. He also seemed to have fought a sea battle against the Athenian στρατηγοί.²² Thereafter, Iphicrates refused to attack several Athenian strongholds, so he was exiled first to Antissa, then to Drys. In spite of many doubts about Demosthenes' records,²³ it is quite certain that the Athenians forgave Iphicrates' thorny past. In fact, they elected him as στρατηγός in 357 during the Social War.

After this summary we can understand that the identity of Iphicrates was not so clearly and distinctly defined: he was an Athenian by birth, married to a Thracian princess and adopted by a Macedonian king. This strange portrait probably led to the accusation of ξενία made against him by Timotheus and recorded by the Pseudo-Demosthenic speech *Against Timotheus for Debts*.²⁴ Timotheus had doubts about the

¹⁹ These are the words of Queen Eurydice to Iphicrates according to Aeschines: "εἶπεν [*scil.* Eurydice] ὅτι Ἀμύντας ὁ πατήρ τῶν παιδίων τούτων, ὅτ' ἔζη, υἱὸν ἐποιήσατό σε, τῇ δὲ Ἀθηναίων πόλει οικειῶς ἐχρήσατο".

²⁰ The alliance between Iphicrates and Amyntas has to be dated before this latter military expedition. From 377 to 374 Iphicrates was fighting in Egypt, from 373 to 371 in the waters around Corcyra, and during 369 against Epaminondas in the Peloponnesus. So it is probable that the meeting of Iphicrates and Amyntas happened between 384/3 and 377/6, when Iphicrates was at Cotys' palace.

²¹ Cf. D. 23.149. The interpretation of this extract is quite difficult: without any new sources, it is impossible to understand whether Iphicrates was discharged or substituted. BIANCO (1997, 199, n. 66) makes a summary of the hypotheses.

²² D. 23.130: "ὄμως ἐτόλμησεν [*scil.* Iphicrates] ὑπὲρ τῶν Κότυος πραγμάτων ἐναντία τοῖς ὑμετέροις στρατηγοῖς ναυμαχεῖν, καὶ περὶ πλείονος ἐποιήσατο τὴν ἐκείνου σωτηρίαν ἢ τὰς ὑπαρχούσας ἑαυτῷ παρ' ὑμῖν τιμάς".

²³ REHDANTZ (1845, 149), HÖCK (1891, 98), and PRITCHETT (1974, 65-66) sustain that the sea battle of Iphicrates against Athens had never taken place. Conversely HARRIS (1989) thinks that Demosthenes was right.

²⁴ Ps.-D. 49.72-73. This accusation has to be dated before the marriage between Menestheus and Timotheus' daughter. On Menestheus as a personification of the tension inherent in Atheno-Thracian connection cf. SEARS (2013: 118-120).

validity of Iphicrates' Athenian citizenship.²⁵ Davies (1971, 250) supposed that the anecdote recorded by Nepos in *Iph.* 3.4 was probably connected to this particular moment of Iphicrates' life. According to Aristotle *Rhet.* 1399a35-39,²⁶ Menestheus was forced to take on a λειτουργία, even if he was too young, under the threat to lose his Athenian citizenship.²⁷ Nevertheless, Davies' hypothesis, surely persuasive, does not explain the literary meaning of Menestheus' words. Maybe we could also suppose that Iphicrates, relative of Cotys and commander of his fleet, seemed to be closer to Thrace than to Athens. However, his wife, married to an Athenian general and daughter of a Thracian king that had obtained the Athenian citizenship, could probably have appeared closer to Athens. But even this hypothesis is not completely persuasive. So we have to find a different explanation for that anecdote.

2. The identity of Menestheus through the analysis of Nepos' text: the role of Menestheus' mother

A different interpretation of Menestheus' words could come from a new and more precise analysis of Nepos' extract. The Roman biographer records that, when Menestheus was asked which parent he respected the most, he answered "his mother": "«matrem» inquit. Id cum omnibus mirum videretur, at ille «merito» inquit «facio»". The justification follows immediately: "«Nam pater, quantum in se fuit, Threcem me genuit, contra ea mater Atheniensem»". Menestheus' words seem quite paradoxical at first sight. In which way could the Athenian Iphicrates have given birth to a Thracian child? Why did his wife, a Thracian princess, have an Athenian child? This paradox is probably only an illusion. Menestheus' answer is based, in fact, on a sharp and intelligent wordplay, a stylistic feature quite common in aphorisms. Menestheus asserts that he praised his mother more: the merit for his Athenian citizenship belonged to her, because she married an Athenian man, whereas Iphicrates chose a Thracian wife. She generated a son (*me genuit*) with an Athenian man and she had the capability to grow a foetus until his birth.

²⁵ Timotheus probably wanted to take revenge against the accusations of ineptitude made by Iphicrates and Callistratus in 374/3, during the preparation of the military expedition against Egypt. After these charges, Timotheus was replaced by Iphicrates.

²⁶ Arist. *Rhet.* 1399a35-39: "Ἄλλος ἐκ τοῦ ἀνάλογον ταῦτα συμβαίνειν, οἷον ὁ Ἰφικράτης, τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, νεώτερον ὄντα τῆς ἡλικίας, ὅτι μέγας ἦν λειτουργεῖν ἀναγκαζόντων, εἶπεν ὅτι εἰ τοὺς μεγάλους τῶν παιδῶν ἀνδρας νομίζουσι, τοὺς μικροὺς τῶν ἀνδρῶν παῖδας εἶναι ψηφιοῦνται".

²⁷ Iphicrates' distance from Athens, who was probably worried to be accused of betrayal, was another problem for Menestheus. Cf. HARRIS (1989, 264-65).

Menestheus' reasoning seems to remind us of a famous extract from Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. During the trial in Athens against Orestes for the killing of his mother Clytemnestra, the Erinyes accused Agamemnon's son not only to be a murderer, but also a matricide. They asserted that he spread his own blood on the ground:

Chor.

652 πῶς ἴγάρ τὸ φεύγειν ἴ τοῦδ' ὑπερδικεῖς ὄρα·
 653 τὸ μητρὸς αἷμ' ὄμαιμιον ἐκχέας πέδοι
 654 ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἄργει δῶματ' οἰκήσει πατρός,²⁸

Apollo replied to the Erinyes that they were wrong because “mother” is not who gives birth to a son, but someone who feeds a son in her womb. The person who gives life is the father: a mother is only a guardian of the foetus while in the womb. After the birth, the child will be given back to the father.

Apol.

657 καὶ τοῦτο λέξω, καὶ μάθ' ὡς ὀρθῶς ἐρῶ·
 658 οὐκ ἔστι μήτηρ ἢ κεκλημένη τέκνου
 659 τοκεύς, τροφὸς δὲ κύματος νεοσπόρου·
 660 τίκτει δ' ὁ θρώισκων, ἢ δ' ἄπερ ξένωι ξένη
 661 ἔσωσεν ἔρνος, οἷσι μὴ βλάβημι θεός.

In his Cambridge edition of *Eumenides*, Sommerstein properly and rightly demonstrates the weakness of Apollo's arguments (SOMMERSTEIN 1989, 206-08): “This particular theory, too, was a minority view even among natural philosophers, most of whom held that both male and female contributed ‘seed’ essential to the process of generation [...]; and from the ordinary person's point of view, it was in conflict with the observable fact that physical and mental characteristics may be inherited from either parent or both, as Hermione inherited her beauty from Helen [...] and Parthenopaeus his from Atalanta” (SOMMERSTEIN 1989, 208).²⁹ Sommerstein finds similar physical theories in a passage of the Aristotelian treaty *Περὶ ζώων γενέσεως* (*de generatione animalium*):

“Φασὶ γὰρ οἱ μὲν τοῖς σπέρμασιν εἶναι ταύτην τὴν ἐναντίωσιν εὐθύς, οἷον Ἄναξαγόρας καὶ ἕτεροι τῶν φυσιολόγων γίνεσθαι τε γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ ἄρρενος τὸ σπέρμα, τὸ δὲ θῆλυ παρέχει τὸν τόπον [...].”³⁰

²⁸ The Greek text is that of WEST (1991).

²⁹ More observations in PÒRTULAS (2001). About the law and religious implications of Apollo's words, cf. PUCCI (1996, 149-50); MILLER (2009, 157-58), who provides parallels with Hegel's philosophy; NEGRI (2009, 15-16).

³⁰ Arist. *GA* 763b31-33. The text is that of LOUIS (1961).

This is not the most suitable place to analyze the physical and philosophical theories of this extract (LESKY 1951, 54; LLOYD 1983, 86-111; BINDI 1999, 177).³¹ Even if these odd theories have been dated back to Egyptian medicine by Peretti (1956),³² Aeschylus' *Eumenides* could have improved their fame in the middle of the 5th century³³ and, maybe, also in the next years. In fact, we find them also in other authors like Euripides³⁴ or Diodorus Siculus.³⁵ Iphicrates was born just after the generation of Aeschylus. Menestheus, as shown before, lived approximately in the same years as Aristotle. During a debate about citizenship, it is possible that Iphicrates' son could have taken advantage of those natural theories from an ironic point of view. However, the evidence still lacks.

The main point is that Menestheus is aware that his father has decided not to marry an Athenian woman, but that he has preferred to marry a Thracian princess. In this way, Menestheus can clearly sustain that he appreciates his mother more because she married an Athenian man: by doing so, she gave Menestheus life and the possibility to become Athenian like his father. By means of her, Iphicrates' son obtained his Athenian identity: she was the vehicle of his Athenian citizenship.³⁶

Menestheus' identity is therefore contained in his words and in his language. Under this perspective, the anecdote recorded by Nepos shows several analogies with the one stated by Athenaeus on the account of Timotheus, Conon's son. According to the tradition followed by the author of the *Δειπνοσοφισταί*, Timotheus was born by a Thracian hetaira.³⁷ One day, when he was mocked for his humble origins, Timotheus proudly answered that he had no shame about his mother, on the contrary he was grateful to her, because she gave him the gift of life. Bianco (1997, 187, n. 29) thinks that Nepos misinterpreted this tradition (later recorded by Athenaeus), wrongly

³¹ See also PÒRTULAS (2001). On the role of women about reproduction in classical Greek science, see DEAN-JONES (1994, 148-224); on Aristotle, cf. especially pp. 176-200.

³² According to Censorinus, Anaxagoras, Alcmaeon and Empedocles sustained that a woman contributes seeds to the embryo just like a man, cf. DEAN-JONES (1994, 148-53). See also PERETTI (1956, 249-59).

³³ Aeschylus' *Eumenides* was performed in 458 B.C.

³⁴ Eur. *Or.* 552 and frg. 1064.

³⁵ D.S. 1.80.4. Other parallels in PERETTI (1956, 241-43).

³⁶ Cf. VAN STAVAREN (1734, 303-04, n. 5), a dated edition, but that still provides useful and precious information: "Sensus iste: pater quantum in se fuit, Thracem potius quam Atheniensem ideo genuit, quia e barbaris exorem duxit: mater, autem, non ex suo sanguine Thracem, sed ex Atheniensi viri complexu Atheniensem gignere studuit. Perstringit patris cum barbara matrimonium: cuius solius fit ea culpa, non matris, si quid hic indignum moribus Graecorum aut opprobrio: obnoxium objiciebatur enim Iphicrati, quod matrem haberet".

³⁷ Ath. 13.577b: "ὁ δὲ Τιμόθεος καὶ σκωπτόμενός ποτε ὅτι τοιαύτης εἶη μητρὸς «καὶ χάριν γε αὐτῆς», φησὶν, «οἶδα, ὅτι δι' αὐτὴν Κόνωνός εἰμι υἱός»".

assigning Timotheus' words to Menestheus. On the contrary Gambato (2001, 1466, n. 1) sustains that these two episodes are not connected. Despite the reference to the Thracian nationality of the mother in both anecdotes, these two are quite different: I) Menestheus said that he appreciated his mother more than his father, whereas Timotheus answered that he was not embarrassed to be the son of an hetaira; II) Nepos' anecdote refers to family and citizenship, whereas that of Athenaeus concerns humble origins; III) Menestheus' mother is a Thracian princess, Timotheus' mother is an hetaira. If Nepos had misunderstood the same anecdote followed by Athenaeus, he should have substituted the name of Timotheus with that of Menestheus and the identity of the mother (not a princess, but an hetaira). There are too many differences for a simple misunderstanding. It is more persuasive to think that Nepos followed an independent source different from that of Athenaeus.

Another difficulty is to understand when the anecdote recorded by Nepos has to be dated. Athenaeus³⁸ sustains that in the 403/2 during the archonship of Euclid, the orator Aristophon of Azenia proposed a law to reform the citizenship: only who was born by Athenian parents could have been considered an Athenian citizen (it seems a renovation of Pericles' law on citizenship approved in the 451/450³⁹). This new law probably created quite a few problems in the political system of Athens. In fact, a *scholium* of Aeschines' speech *Against Timarchus* reminds us that Eumelos the Peripatetic,⁴⁰ in his third book about ancient comedy, recorded that Nikomenes, a politician not yet known, proposed an attenuation of Aristophon' law. This regulation stated that who was born from a non-Athenian parent before Euclid's archonship could have been considered Athenian. However, who was born after that archonship needed both Athenian parents to be considered a citizen.⁴¹ We do not know how long Nikomenes' law was in power, but maybe it could have had a sort of influence on Menestheus' political life. Due to the marriage with a Thracian woman, Iphicrates might have represented a problem for his son's citizenship in a specific period in Athens' history.⁴² These problems were surely (and ultimately) solved because

³⁸ Ath. 13.577b: “Αριστοφῶν δ’ ὁ ῥήτωρ, ὁ τὸν νόμον εἰσενεγκὼν ἐπ’ Εὐκλείδου ἄρχοντος ὃς ἂν μὴ ἐξ ἀστῆς γένηται νόθον εἶναι, αὐτὸς ἀπεδείχθη”.

³⁹ On this law and the new role of the women in Athens cf. OSBORNE (1997).

⁴⁰ *FGrHist* 77 F 2: “Εὐμηλος ὁ Περιπατητικὸς ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ Περι τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμωδίας φησι Νικομένη τινὰ ψήφισμα θέσθαι μηδένα τῶν μετ’ Εὐκλείδην ἄρχοντα μετέχειν τῆς πόλεως, ἂν μὴ ἄμφω τοὺς γονεάς ἀστοὺς ἐπιδείξῃται, τοὺς δὲ πρὸ Εὐκλείδου ἀνεξετάστως ἀφεῖσθαι”.

⁴¹ Cf. the note of STRONK (2016). See also GAMBATO (2001, 1466, n. 3).

⁴² Cf. DAVIES (1971, 250).

Menestheus participated fully in Athenian political life⁴³: his sharp answer, recorded by Nepos, could probably reflect a discussion about his identity, citizenship, and origins.

Conclusion

There are no doubts about Menestheus' identity. He was an Athenian citizen who held public and military positions. Nevertheless, the historians did not seem to be interested in the origins of this anecdote. From Nepos' text we can clearly understand that the interest of the readers was not in Iphicrates' or Menestheus' status in Athens, but instead it focused on Menestheus' witticism and his ability to joke with words. The Roman biographer could have read the episode in rhetorical manuals (that often gathers curious anecdotes or impressive sentences useful for the training of young orators) or in a collection of aphorisms and famous sentences, similar to the Βασιλέων ἀποφθέγματα καὶ στρατηγῶν (*mor.* 59) and the Ἀποφθέγματα Λακωνικά (*mor.* 60) attributed to Plutarch, in which the memory of the historical date is less important than the interest for the sharp and intelligent sentence. The lack of other sources concerning this episode shows that Nepos followed a less known source, maybe very close to scholastic and rhetorical texts for students of rhetoric. The uniqueness of this source gives Nepos' biography a main role in the reconstruction of Iphicrates' and, above all, Menestheus' identity.

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⁴³ Cf. OSBORNE (1990: 35-38).

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Μακριά από το κέρδος, την εκμετάλλευση και την εμπορευματοποίηση της πνευματικής ιδιοκτησίας, οι **Εκδόσεις Σαΐτα** επιδιώκουν να επαναπροσδιορίσουν τις σχέσεις Εκδότη-Συγγραφέα-Αναγνώστη, καλλιεργώντας τον πραγματικό διάλογο, την αλληλεπίδραση και την ουσιαστική επικοινωνία του έργου με τον αναγνώστη δίχως προϋποθέσεις και περιορισμούς.

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το γλυκό αεράκι της **δημιουργικότητας**,
ο ζέφυρος της **καινοτομίας**,
ο σιρόκος της **φαντασίας**,
ο λεβάντες της **επιμονής**,
ο γραίγος του **οράματος**,
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Σας καλούμε λοιπόν να αφήσετε τα βιβλία να πετάξουν ελεύθερα!



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