

- 25 ἔλθόντες ἀλλήλοισι om. Suda  
 ἔρροντες Starkie  
 ἔλκοντες Bachmann

In 24 εἶτα δέ followed by the indicative after a simple participle is considered by some a syntactical oddity, hence the various conjectures. Olson in his recent commentary is probably right to dismiss the conjectures and print the paradosis, in part at least on the strength of the protection afforded by *Eq.* 375-81.<sup>1</sup> Olson goes on to describe 25 as a ‘troubled verse’, opining that the lack of a definite article before πρώτου ξύλου can be explained as defining the prize being competed for (‘a seat in the very front’) and that the real trouble lies with ἔλθόντες (which is pointless after ἦκοντες in 24). After explaining why the conjectures of Starkie and Bachmann do not persuade he concludes by obelizing ἔλθόντες.

I believe there is a word of which ἔλθόντες could well be a corruption and which fits the required sense: ἀθλοῦντες. The verb ἀθλέω does not occur elsewhere in Aristophanes, but it does in other Attic writers of prose and verse. Verbs of competing naturally take a dative like ἀλλήλοισι. Moreover, ἀθλοῦντες would add an appropriately mock-heroic tone here (perhaps signifying something more than merely ‘contend’ given its connection with ἀθλον, ‘prize’), and the corruption would have been simple enough. The meaning will then be that the prytaneis ‘will jostle as they compete with one another for the prize of a front row seat’.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S. Douglas Olson, *Aristophanes: Acharnians* (Oxford, 2002), 74. To Olson’s reasoning against Dobree’s conjecture might be added the fact that it would introduce a third foot anapaest with word divide after the princeps, which is a fairly uncommon resolution.

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Professor James Diggle for comments on a draft of this note.

## PITY THE POOR TRAVELLER: A NEW COMIC TRIMETER (ARISTOPHANES?)

Strabo is explaining the reasons for the prosperity of Corinth.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty of rounding Cape Malea is a major factor. To illustrate this he quotes a proverb:

ἦν δ’ ὥσπερ ὁ πορθμὸς οὐκ εὐπλοῦς ὁ κατὰ τὴν Σικελίαν τὸ παλαιόν, οὕτω καὶ τὰ πελάγη, καὶ μάλιστα τὸ ὑπὲρ Μαλεῶν, διὰ τὰς ἀντιπνοιάς· ἀφ’ οὗ καὶ παροιμιάζονται

*Μαλέας δὲ κάμφας ἐπιλάθου τῶν οἴκαδε.*

The codices<sup>2</sup> vary between *Μαλέας* (in MS E), the plural form which was used by Homer and by Strabo himself (probably to emphasize the continuity between Homeric Greece and his own time), and the singular *Μαλέαν* (in MSS Bv, Nicetas, *Chron. Hist.* p. 73, 19 Dietsen, Pletho), which was more current in classical times. The verse is quoted with *Μαλέαν* as a ‘proverb’ by schol. Hom. *Od.* 9.80 (cf. Eustathius,

<sup>1</sup> *Geog.* 8.6.20.

<sup>2</sup> I cite the text and sigla of S. Radt, *Strabons Geographika* (Göttingen, 2002).

*Comm. in Hom. Od.* 1468,10ff., with *Μαλείας*); it appears nowhere else. Symmachus rendered it into Latin, also using the singular:<sup>3</sup>

*vulgati quippe proverbii est enavigata Malea oblimari eorum memoriam quos domi reliqueris.*

The original ‘proverb’, the origins of which have never been discussed, scans as a comic trimeter. Both the sense, ‘once you’ve passed Malea, forget the folks back home’, and the metre are redolent of comedy. The verse could of course come from Menander, who uses *ἐπιλάθου* four times in his surviving plays. However, although Strabo’s previous quotation is from Homer, and further on he cites Euripides, before the latter extract he discusses the prostitutes of Corinth:

καὶ διὰ ταύτας οὖν πολυωχλείτο ἡ πόλις καὶ ἐπλουτίζετο· οἱ γὰρ ναύκληροι ῥαδίως ἐξανηλίσκοντο, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἡ παροιμία φησίν·

οὐ παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἐς Κόρινθον ἐσθ’ ὁ πλοῦς.

Horace renders this verse *non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum*.<sup>4</sup> Hesychius<sup>5</sup> attributes it to Aristophanes. I suggest that both trimeters form a couplet, a wry discussion of the painful choice of routes around the Peloponnese faced by poor and rich travellers alike—either a tedious and risky journey round Malea, or the financially ruinous short cut via Corinth:

οὐ παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἐς Κόρινθον ἐσθ’ ὁ πλοῦς·  
Μαλέαν δὲ κάμψας ἐπιλάθου τῶν οἰκάδε.

Strabo quotes another ‘proverb’ about Corinth shortly afterwards:<sup>6</sup>

χώραν δ’ ἔσχεν οὐκ εὐγεων σφόδρα, ἀλλὰ σκολιάν τε καὶ τραχεῖαν· ἀφ’ οὗ †πάντες† “ὄφρυνόντα Κόρινθον” εἰρήκασι καὶ παροιμιάζονται

Κόρινθος ὄφρυνάξει τε καὶ κοιλαίνεται.

Could this trimeter too be from the same play?<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 8. 61. The parallel is signalled by R. Baladié, *Strabon: Géographie, Tome V, Livre VIII* (Paris, 1978), 236.

<sup>4</sup> *Epist.* 1.17.36.

<sup>5</sup> Hsch. ο 1799 = Ar. fr. 928 Kassel–Austin. Radt has silently corrected the εἰς of the MSS to ἐς.

<sup>6</sup> *Geog.* 8.6.23.

<sup>7</sup> Radt prints Cobet’s emendation of ὄφρυνᾶ τε or ὄφρύνεται to ὄφρυνάξει. The fragment is *adespota* fr. \*912 in R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci, Vol. VIII Adespota* (Berlin–New York, 1995).