

CLEON AND THE SPARTIATES IN ARISTOPHANES' *KNIGHTS*

ΑΑΑ. ἀλλ' ὅμως οὗτος τοιοῦτος ὢν ἅπαντα τὸν βίον,
κᾶτ' ἀνὴρ ἔδοξεν εἶναι, τ' ἀλλότριον ἀμῶν θέρος.
νῦν δὲ τοὺς στάχους ἐκείνους, οὓς ἐκείθεν ἤγαγεν,
ἐν ξύλῳ δήσας ἀφανεῖ ἀποδόσθαι βούλεται.

Aristophanes, *Equites* 391-4.

394 ἀφανεῖ R: ἀφαύει VΦ Suid. s.vv. ἀφανανθήσομαι, ἀμώμενοι: ἀφαίνει Ribbeck

IN 394 most editors of the *Knights* read ἀφαύει, cited uniquely¹ from this passage in the lexicæ, in the sense 'dry up, parch'² (the simple αὖω is said to mean ξηραίνω, Hdn. *Gr.* 2. 132, although it nowhere occurs in extant literature; but cf. αὔος, etc.), referring, for the condition and appearance of the prisoners after long captivity and privations, to *Nub.* 186, where the allusion is to the squalor and emaciation of the Socratics. Now Aristophanes' skill in maintaining allusively an image, once a keyword has been supplied, makes me wonder how line 394 was intended to complete the metaphor of the harvest and the crop in 392-3. Elsewhere in the play (55, cf. 1166-7) he has a similar metaphor from the 'finished article'—the cake baked by Demosthenes, μᾶζαν . . . παρέθηκε τὴν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ μεμαγμένην, and one might—with some effort—make a secondary meaning for ἐν ξύλῳ . . . ἀφαύει by comparing schol. *Plut.* 1037 where the word τηλία is explained *inter alia* as ξύλον πλατὺ εἰς ὃ τιθέασιν οἱ ἄρτοκόποι τοὺς ἄρτους ἐπὶ τῷ ξηραίνεσθαι (or ἐν ᾧ ἄλφιστα ἐπιπράσκοντο).

But I much prefer to read with Ribbeck ἀφαίνει (or indeed ἀφανεῖ, the reading of R)³ = winnow, thresh (cf. Hsch. ἄφηναι· ἔκοψα, and ἀφῆναι· τὸ τὰς ἐπιτισμένας κριθὰς ταῖς χερσὶ τρύψαι). This reading is suggested on two additional counts: (a) schol. *Eq.* 393 has φησὶν οὖν τοὺς ἀνδρας ἐκείνους, οὓς δήσας ἤγαγεν, ἀφεῖναι νῦν καὶ ἀπολύσαι διανοεῖται, where ἀφεῖναι (let go) has replaced the unfamiliar ἀφαίνει, perhaps influenced by the sense also of the following ἀποδόσθαι. (b) The longer summary of schol. 393 ends ὥς εἴ τις ἀγνώμων ἀνὴρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ τῷ ἀμῆτῳ καὶ ταῖς ἄλωσιν ἐκβαλὼν τὸν σπείραντα γεωργὸν καὶ προπεπονηκότα τοὺς καρποὺς ἀξιοῖ πορίζεσθαι. Here it does not seem to have been noticed that καὶ ταῖς ἄλωσιν⁴ represents nothing if ἀφαίνει is read, but that the form of expression 'following after the harvesting and threshing-floors' assumes a reference not only to the harvest (at Pylos) but also the operation of winnowing.

¹ ἀφαύειν in the Suda's quotation of *Thesm.* 216 is certainly a corruption of ἀφεύειν. L.S.J. pass in silence over ἀφαυε in *Pax* 1144, accepting instead ἄφευε. The former should be read, but in the sense 'scoop, or draw out'—see my article 'The verb αὖω and its compounds' (see below, pp. 306 ff.).

² 'Soumet au régime de la faim' (Van Daele).

³ The simple verb occurs (dubiously) in *Ar. fr.* 694, in the sense 'peel', but Eust. 801. 60, referring to Paus. *Gr.* (fr. 21),

quotes ἀνείν, with ἀ: δηλοῖ δὲ τὸ πρίσσειν, ὡς Ἀριστοφάνης ἐν *Εἰρήνῃ* δηλοῖ. 'This unusual form of a rare verb does not occur in *Pax* as we have it. Again it seems likely that the citer has given a wrong reference' (Platnauer, *Peace*, *Introd.* xix). It is conceivable, I suppose, that the source was *Eq.* 394 itself, the simple verb being quoted instead of the ἀπο- compound.

⁴ Cf. schol. *Thesm.* 2 ἀλοῶν· ἐν κύκλῳ περιάγων ὡς οἱ ἐν ταῖς ἄλωσι, καὶ τὸ κόπτειν ἀλοῶν λέγουσιν ἀπὸ τῶν κοπτόντων τοὺς στάχους.

As to the implications of 'winnowing' in the context of the Sphacteria prisoners, it may not refer to any bodily ill-treatment, as L.S.J. thought when they quoted this passage s.v. *ἀφανέω* in the sense 'thrash, beat'—no doubt with the gloss *κόπτω* in mind. Apart from Aristophanes' reference to the 'stocks' here, and the implications of the comparison to the Socratics in *Nub.* 186 (by which time they had spent another year in captivity), I know of no reference to reprisals against these captives at all. Thucydides, it is true, who says they were confined *δεσμοῖς* (4. 41), refers to a threat to kill them if the Spartans invaded Attica, but it is clear that the Athenians regarded them as a useful bargaining weapon. Moreover, Nicias' *φιλανθρωπία* towards them is mentioned in Plut. *Nic.* 9. 4. As the purpose of winnowing is primarily to separate the wheat from the chaff, and as Aristophanes goes on to allude to Cleon's hopes of a profitable sale, I suspect that he had in mind the fact that of the 292 Spartan prisoners 'about 120' were Spartiates (Thuc. 4. 38), *ἐξ οἴκων τε πρώτων τῆς Σπάρτης καὶ φίλους καὶ συγγενεῖς τοὺς δυνατωτάτους ἔχοντες* (Plut. *Nic.* 10. 7), the particular importance of whom must have been recognized by both sides. Cleon therefore had a special interest in winnowing the 120 Spartiates from the rest with a view to a profitable bargain, and Aristophanes often refers to his susceptibility to bribes¹—e.g. *Eq.* 403, 469, 834, 996, the first of these actually being in connection with the prisoners (*ἐπὶ γὰρ τοῖς δεδεμένοις χαλκεύεται*).

If *ἐν ξύλῳ δῆσας* contains any secondary reference to the harvest metaphor (and it is perhaps not absolutely necessary that it should), *δῆσας* could well allude to the binding of the captive 'crop' as if in sheaves—cf. Hsch. *δεταί· λαμπάδες καὶ αἱ πέδαι καὶ τὰ δράγματα*, the Homeric *ἀμαλλοδετήρ*, etc.² It seems to have been the practice to place the individual bound sheaves directly upon the threshing-floor³—Hes. *Scut.* 291 *οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἐν ἑλλεδανοῖσι δέον καὶ ἔπιτονον ἀλωήν*.

Finally, it might be recalled that Aristophanes has a similar metaphor from winnowing in *Ach.* 507–8 *ἀλλ' ἐσμὲν αὐτοὶ νῦν γε περιεπτισμένοι· τοὺς γὰρ μετοίκους ἄχυρα τῶν ἀστῶν λέγω*.

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¹ Cf. schol. Luc. *Tim.* 30 *δωροδόκος εἰς ὑπερβολὴν ὑπῆρχεν*. Similar accusations occur also in *Ach.* 6 (with schol.), *Nub.* 591, *Vesp.* 759.

² *Il.* 18. 553.

³ See Holden's note on Xen. *Oec.* 18. 3. 21. It would be additionally attractive if the fifth-century Athenians used *wooden* threshing-floors, but I do not find this to be the case.