In this despondent monologue, Onesimus has admitted that he is a stupid fool in comparison with Habrotonon, and he now determines to mend his ways: no longer will he be a meddler and a babbler. At 400 (Koerte’s numbering: it is 359 in Jensen), the papyrus produces a verse that does not scan, with ὑπόεις and η oμουί rather inappropriate after ἐκτε- μείν. Many remedies have been tried since 1907, but it is mainly a tale of misplaced ingenuity, as the following discussion will show.

In order to retain ὑπόεις, it is necessary to assume that ὑπόεις is a careless mistake for τοῦς (in itself, plausible enough, although Lefèvre was wrong actually to interpret the traces on the papyrus as τοῦς), and to mend the metre by deleting ἄλλοι (von Arnim, Wilamowitz, Koerte 1910) or by replacing ὀμουί with ὁμοί (Wilamowitz, the later editions of Koerte). But this reminds one of the doctor who amputated a healthy arm to cure a poisoned foot! There is nothing wrong here with ἄλλοι (for the use of this phrase to announce a new arrival, cf. Samia 2.94); the fault lies in the ampossible collocation ἐκτεμείν τοῦς ὑπόεις. Teeth are not “cut away” in ancient Greece; Attic uses ἔκβαλλειν (Solon, 19.2. Diehl; Eur. Cycl. 644) or...

1) Cf. W. Schmid, Philologus, xcvi 1943, 157. Yet this fault is not so bad as that of failing to recognise a poisoned foot when one sees one. Coppola (RFIC, ix N.S., 1931, 253) advances the theory that the papyrus text (with ὑπόεις corrected to τοῦς only) stands as Menander wrote it; that ὑπόεις here is a Menandrean euphemism for δοξέως; and that the line’s failure to scan is an intentional error on Menander’s part; cf. the editions of Wachtler and De Falco, ad loc. The ingenuity of these suggestions seems to me misplaced; neither Menander nor any other Attic comedian can be proved to have written one single unmetrical line for such an allegedly humorous purpose; and the only comment that one may legitimately make is to refer the reader to Aristophanes, Ran. 1323 ff.
"OnTeLV (At. Ban. 573) for the method of dental extraction relevant to Onesimus’ present monologue 2). Capps, Robert and ‘Unus Multorum’ suggest that ὀδόντας may have been a joke παρὰ προσδοκίαν; the last-named writes: “the expression ἔκτε­μεις shows that it was not teeth he was first thinking of, but something different. He begins by bringing his hand lower down, but then thinking better of it he takes it to his mouth and touches his teeth” 3). This interpretation is rather forced, ignoring as it does the fact that in ancient comedy double-entendre jokes normally depend on phraseology more precise and more meaningful than that of ἔκτεμειν τοὺς ὀδόντας. The two relevant types were (1) to replace one word by another of (sometimes) roughly similar sound, which though of unrelated meaning nevertheless produced a new phrase of impeccable precision (e.g., Ar. Ran. 422) 4); and (2) to substitute for the offensive word a suggestive metaphor (e.g., Men. Pk. 232ff).

Thus if Menander wrote ἔκτεμειν, and there is no reason to doubt that he did, he could not also have written τοὺς ὀδόντας. What then were the appendages that Onesimus could have had cut off? Two alternatives are logically possible: τὴν γλώσσαν (cf. Herodotus, ix 112; Herondas, vi 41), and τοὺς ὄμηκος. But if Menander had written a metrical equivalent of τὴν γλώσσαν (cf. εἰς τὸν λόγον’, cf. Ar. Ran. 575), why should it have been corrupted to τοὺς ὀδόντας? No reason suggests itself. More probably then the original word was a metrical substitute for τοὺς ὄμηκος; in this case ὀδόντας would be a pedagogic bowdlerisation, as Schmid has convincingly argued 5).

But what was that original word? Schmid (after van Leeuwen) proposed τοὺς νεφρόντες, alleging that “kidneys” was an euphemism for ὄμηκος, and citing Ar. Ran. 1279f and Philippides, fr. 5 Kock, as parallel instances. There are two weaknesses in this theory. First, τοὺς νεφρόντες would be a genteelism already; what then would have been the point of its removal by some antique Bowdler? Secondly, although τοὺς νεφρόντες may plausibly be interpreted as euphemistic in the two comic passages cited, the references there differ from that of the Menander passage. Over Philippides, fr. 5, it seems as if Schmid (as well as the original editor, Athenaeus ix 384 e) misses the point 6).

The only legitimate conclusion to be drawn from the witticism put in Gnathaena’s mouth by Philippides is that this hetaera once intentionally

2) The objection to ἔκτεμειν rules out of court the otherwise attractive suggestion that ὀδόντας may be a gloss for τομεῖς (Croiset) or μύλονς (Hense, Sudhaus).

3) In The Lateky Disovered Fragments of Menander, Oxford 1909, 48. The ἔκτεμεις of this author is an incorrect reading.

4) Schmid (after Coppola) makes a not dissimilar point about Ar. Av. 442ff.


6) Mistaken interpretations of this sort are not infrequent in Athenaeus: perhaps a few instances may be collected here. Athenaeus ii 67 d, Aristophanes fr. 688 is no evidence for the excellence of vinegar from Cleonae; at iii 123f, Alexis fr. 141, 10 (where χύνα is the object of παρακενακο‑μεν, not of τίνειν) is wrongly cited to prove that snow was drunk; at vi 230 b, Athenaeus misinterprets the dramatic background of Alexis fr. 2; at vii 365 d, the use of the word συμβολαί in Alexis fr. 143 has nothing to do with contribution dinners; at ix 367f, Alexis fr. 86 is no evidence for the use of παρογις = plate; at ix 373 c d, Cratinus fr. 114 is no evidence for a masculine use of ἄρνης, since φωινκάπτερος is of two terminations.
misnamed some cooked δόξες as νεφρόλ for a definite purpose: to turn the embarrassed blushes of the other ladies present into relieved laughter; clearly the existence of this particular witticism is no guarantee that νεφρόλ was a common euphemism for δόξες at that time. In *Ran.* 1279f, on the other hand, the reference is merely to having a pain in the lumbar regions, and the positional vagueness of the verb used (σουσιομία) makes the euphemism comprehensible. It is doubtful, however, if the same genteeism would have been possible after the much more precise δέκτεμέν. In English one may have a pain in ‘the loins’, but one would not cut them off.

I suggest, accordingly, that Menander may have written τὰς γονάς. For the use of γονάδι = the male genitals, see Hippocrates, *Art.* 45 (Littre iv 194, Jones-Withington iii 290), where Galen defines the Hippocratic usage as follows: γονάς δὲ εἱσφαξε τα γεννητα μόρια, μῆτεραν μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν θηλείων, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τα στερματικα τα καλούμενα (Commentary on Hippocrates, *Art.*, iii 41, = Kühn xviii A, 543); cf. also Hippocrates, *Mochl.* 1 (Littre iv 342) and *Liqu.* 2 (Littre vi 122). That an Ionic prose usage should turn up in a passage of Menander would be no surprise: after all, the comic poet was writing at the time of the development of the κοινή dialect).

If τὰς γονάς is right, there are two possible ways of explaining the papyrus corruption. If ΓΟΥΣ were merely a slip of the pen for τοῦς, we should be presented with a simple example of a bowdlerising interpolation that had removed all traces of the original reading. But is it not also possible that ΓΟΕΣ was corrupted from a blurred ΤΟΝΑΣ, at a time when the interpolated τοῦς δδόντας had not yet driven τὰς γονάς completely out of the text?

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Lückebüßer


ὢ δ' εὐπάθεια φιλόγελιος τε ἱππόθενος
Βοηθεῖ μεθ' ἡμῶν εὐμενής ἐποι' ἄει.

Bonn

Ernst Vogt

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