

## A Note on Menander Dysc. 101 sq.

A pathetic crone, the Simiche of somewhat later, pointed out the hillock to him. Shortly after, with the scene vivid to his mind, Pyrrhias described his impressions. The old fellow up there was driving himself without stint. His pear trees had on them the wild crop which, sooner or later, he would feed to the stock. He kept on accumulating it, but all the same the stretching and the stooping at that age visibly perplexed his bones. Young Pyrrhias wondered whether, at the end of his day's labour, the pears the crofter had gathered would be quite as abundant as his aches.

προσηλθέ μοι  
γραῦς τις κακοδαίμων. [αὐτ]όθεν δ' οὖ νῦν λέγων  
ἔστηκ', ἔδειξεν αὐ[τὸ]ν ἐπὶ τοῦ λοφιδίου  
ἐκεῖ περιφθειρόμενον, ἀχράδας ἢ πολὺν  
κύφων' ἑαυτῷ συλλέγοντα<sup>1</sup>).

What he achieved with that was not a new witticism. It had a tradition behind it, and not unexpectedly, given the harshness of the earth in parts of Attica.

*Peisistratus, you may read, taxed the Athenians by a tenth of what their farms would yield. As he was out one day, he asked an old husbandman who worked the ground where the other could only see rock and the perfect site for a quarry: "What sort of crops can you take off fields like these?" This one had an answer for him: "Pains is all I ever win, pains and sores, but Peisistratus sees that he gets a tithe of them!" The tyrant liked that, and in an accession of favoritism certified that for being blunt with him he would no longer be subject to the tax. "A tax-payer less, and thanks to his sores": that used to be a cant word in Attica, and it arose as a comment on the roadside incident<sup>2</sup>).*

1) Most understand Knemon to be actually ἀχράδας συλλέγοντα, at the same time to be figuratively κύφων' ἑαυτῷ συλλέγοντα, and they definitely give to κύφων, literally a "pillory", the meaning of a "painful stiffness". But some cannot or cannot quite overcome their uneasiness. The present note attempts to convince the doubting by illustrating from elsewhere the widely accepted interpretation.

2) Zenobius *centuria* IV, 76 (Paroemiographi Graeci, ed. Leutsch, Schneidewin, vol. I, Göttingen 1839, p. 105) καὶ σφάκελοι ποιοῦσιν ἀτέλειαν.

*Τίνας ἐκ τῶν τόπων κομίζῃ καρπούς; Peisistratus was curious to know. Ὀδύνας καὶ σφακέλους, and the man got personal. The joke, then, which Pyrrhias made, could appear under a different guise, but if his had lost the quality of a novelty a fresh twist was introduced just the same. There were many words for explaining the pain or the wound. Instead, something little tried caught the fancy. The dictionary has no record of *κύφων* the distress rather than what produced that. Not only was it a fresh notion, but it seems never to have become uppermost. Nothing like the history loomed as for *tripalium*<sup>3</sup>).*