

MOSCHUS' *MEGARA*, 56f.

Ὀς ἄρ' ἔφη· τὰ δέ οἱ θαλερώτερα δάκρυα μήλων
κόλπιν ἐς ἡμερόεντα κατὰ βλεφάρων ἐχέοντο

Many of the imagined difficulties in these two lines owe their existence to the prejudiced notion that a poet who alludes to the text of another poet must reproduce that poet's text. And yet, perhaps no more artistically than here, the poet of the *Megara* has echoed several of his predecessors and added original touches.

Ὀς ἄρ' ἔφη is very common in Homer at the conclusion of a speech occurring no less than twenty-five times with δέ introducing (as here) the following clause¹). But our poet in this passage clearly had in mind A. R. 4. 34: Ὀς ἄρ' ἔφη, βλεφάρων δὲ κατ' ἄθροα δάκρυα χεῦεν. He recognized that Apollonius' ἄθροα was an innovation; Homer commonly employs θαλερός with 'tears', never ἄθροός (cf. *Il.* 6. 496, 17. 696, 23. 397, 24. 9, 794). He therefore substituted the more Homeric adjective but kept δάκρυα in the same position.

In Homer, however, the adjective θαλερός when in this position is followed by the phrase κατὰ δάκρυον χέοντες (eight times in the *Odyssey*, twice in the *Iliad*)²). The *Megara* poet retained the verb *in tmesi* and in the same position but moved it to the following line, thereby giving himself room after δάκρυα to incorporate an appealing metaphor ("tears bigger than apples") which he remembered from Theoc. 14. 38: θάλπε φίλον. τήνῳ τεὰ δάκρυα; μᾶλα χέοντω. "Go and cuddle your other friend. Your tears are for him, are they? Then let them flow as big as apples". [Gow] Cf. also Theoc. 14. 32: ἔκλαιεν ἐξαπίνας θαλερώτερον ἢ παρὰ ματρὶ. In 1. 57 the *Megara* poet substituted Apollonius' βλεφάρων between the preverb and verb for δάκρυα, which would normally appear there (cf. also A. R. 1. 1067, καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ βλεφάρων ὄσα δάκρυα χεῦατ' ἔραζε)³).

The comparison of tears with apples (μήλων) in our passage is thus defended against Sitzler's πηγῶν and Wakefield's μᾶλλον just as μᾶλα is defended in Theocritus against Wilamowitz' ἀλλὰ (see Gow, *Theocritus*². II, 254). Likewise, Hartung's χέοντων should perhaps be retained in Theocritus against Wilamowitz' χέοντω (confined to inscriptions) on the ground that the poet of the *Megara* in his allusion has also used a plural verb with neuter plural subject (δάκρυα ... ἐχέοντο).

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1) See Ebeling, *Lex. Hom.* II. 419.

2) Cf. also P. Oxy. 2075 fr. 3 = Hes. Fr. 116.6 (Merkelbach-West) in the same position κατ' ἄ δάκρυον χέου[υ]σα and note Hunt's conjecture at 1. 7, κατ' ἄ κό[λ]πο[υ]ν (cf. *Megara* 57).

3) The allusion becomes even more apparent if it is noted that Homer will occasionally use ὀφθαλμῶν between κατὰ and χέω (e.g. *Il.* 16. 344, 20. 421; *Od.* 22. 88) but never βλεφάρων.