ὅταν ἡ τῶν ὠμότον τῆς ἁκμῆς λήγῃ; σὺ δὲ ἐπιχειροῦν τούτων ἐπὶ πόρρῳ

when the sight of the eyes fades from its prime—but you, in your present striving, are still far from these (developments).

Two steps to corruption may be imagined. That σὺ δὲ ἐπιχειροῦν was miscopied as ἐπιχειροῦν σὺ δὲ would scarcely surprise, for transpositions such as this are common in the manuscripts; we may compare, for example, the respective readings of B and TW at 183e1, μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐρῶν] μᾶλλον ἐρῶν ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς. With λήγηι and ἐπιχειροῦν now juxtaposed, a syntactical ‘correction’ was obviously needed.

Hence λήγειν ἐπιχειρητί—acceptable syntax, unacceptable sense.

Let me end on a subjective note, on tone. An anonymous referee, whose helpful comments I gratefully acknowledge, wonders if the ‘emphatic contrast’ (between Alcibiades’ striving and the attaining of true discernment) which I claim for the emended text is not already present ‘in the structure of the discourse’. It is, probably, yet a culminating ἐπιχειροῦν may hold a hint of impatience in Socrates’ warning, ‘you’re striving to exchange beauty … you’re striving to get the truth … but in all of this striving of yours …’; for such impatience, compare the immediately preceding vocative address, ὦ μακάριε, which is ‘capable of conveying correction, rebuke, or even indignation’.

New York

ARCHIBALD ALLEN
archibaldallen@icloud.com
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TIPPLING BUT NOT TOPPLING: EUBULUS, PCG FR. 123*

Eubulus, fr. 123 K.—A. = fr. 126 Hunter is incompletely preserved in the epitome of Ath. Deipn. 1.23b:

εἰρηστὶ δὲ τὸ βρέχειν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ πίνειν. Αντιφάνης:

ἐξομολογεὶ:

Σίκων ἐγὼ

βεβρεγμένος ἢκο καὶ κεκουθωνισμένος.

Α. πέπωκας σύτος; Σίκων: <— ν —> πέπωκ’ ἐγώ, μά <τῶν> Διὰ τῆν Μενδαίαν.

The word brechein [lit. ‘moisten’] has also been used of drinking. Antiphanes:

‘After all, those who have eaten must drink [brechein] greedily.’

Eubulus:

‘I, Sikon, am here—sloshed [bebregmenos] and in my cups.’ …

A: ‘Hey, are you drunk?’ Sikon: ‘[…] I am drunk, not by Zeus of Mende.’

7 Cf. G. Boter, The Textual Tradition of Plato’s Republic (Leiden, New York, Köln, 1989), 107.
8 S.H. Halliwell, ‘Forms of address: Socratic vocatives in Plato’, in F. de Martino and A.H. Sommerstein (edd.), Lo Spettacolo delle Voci, vol. 2 (Bari, 1995), 87–121, at 107, cited by Rowe (n. 6), ad loc.

* My thanks to Richard Hunter and Alan Sommerstein for comments and criticisms.
The epitome of Athenaeus does not retain all the details of how these comic fragments were embedded in the conversation which Athenaeus originally presented, though the extract’s first sentence shows that one purpose was to exemplify the application of βρέχω to drinking. Editors of both Athenaeus and Eubulus have left the connection of the latter’s fragment to its conversational context at that. I submit that what follows in the epitome, as well as what precedes, casts light both on that connection and on how we should restore the text.

Athenaeus’ epitome continues with:

(1) an initial claim that the proper application of ἀναπίπτω is to the soul (‘I flag’);
(2) citations for other senses of the verb, namely ‘I give ground’ (Thuc. 1.70) and ‘I lean back’ of rowers (Cratinus, PCG fr. 332; Xen. Oec. 8.8);
(3) a claim that ἀνάκειμαι properly means ‘I am dedicated’, not ‘I recline’, which is κατάκειμαι or κατακλίνω;
(4) acknowledgement that ἀνάκειμαι is in fact found in the sense ‘I recline’;
(5) an abrupt return at 23e to citations of ἀναπίπτω, this time in the sense ‘I fall on my back’ (Eur. Cyc. 410; Alexis, PCG fr. 295).

To judge from the parts of Athenaeus where we do not rely on an epitome, Larensis’ guests are likely to have been competing in mastery of the usage of ἀναπίπτω and, in passing, of the similar verb ἀνάκειμαι. (4) refutes (3). (2) may similarly refute (1), or be a qualification offered by the initial speaker. (5) adds a point overlooked in (1)–(2), and was perhaps uttered by the same character as (4) and with the same critical tone.

With a very slight emendation we can restore the fragment of Eubulus so that it would naturally spark the ensuing linguistic discussion of ἀναπίπτω.

A. πέπωκας οὗτος; Sikon: <ἀνα>πέπωκας ἐγώ, μά <τόν> Δία τὸν Μενδάκιον.

Sikon’s use of (-)πέπωκα after πέπωκας would be a pun, which was prone to corruption through assimilation. Claim (1) would follow as an interpretation of the sense of the fragment, or in an argument that Sikon (or Eubulus) misused the verb; claim (5) would circle back to correct this.

What should fill the remaining syllables? The μά strongly suggests that Sikon’s asseveration was negated, which leads me to suggest <οὐδὲ γ’>. The whole fragment might then be translated:

1 Besides PCG vol. 5, see G. Kaibel, Athenaei Naucratitae Dipnosophistarum libri XV, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1887); A.M. Desrousseaux and C. Astruc, Athénée de Naucratis: Les Deipnosophistes: livres I–II (Paris, 1956); R.L. Hunter, Eubulus: The Fragments (Cambridge, 1983); S.D. Olson, Athenaeus: The Learned Banqueters, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 2006). Kaibel suggested <ὣμετρίως>. J.P. Postgate, ‘A few notes on Athenaeus’, CQ 2 (1908), 294–5 supplied <ἱπρόνικ’, οὗ>. ‘I’ve made it vanish, not drunk it’. However, his model for this (Plaut. Mil. 833–4 di me perdant si bibi ... obsorbui, ‘I’m damned if I drank ... I glugged’) works better, because the punchline comes second. Desrousseaux and Astruc supplied <οὐς ἔσον> and assigned all of lines 3–4 to ‘A.’; I do not see parallels for a peremptory question with οὗτος being merely rhetorical.

2 For a particularly stimulating discussion of the dynamics of competitive citation in Athenaeus, see C. Jacob, ‘La citation comme performance dans les Deipnosophistes d’Athénéé’, in C. Darbo-Peschanski (ed.), La citation dans l’antiquité (Grenoble, 2004), 147–74.
Sikon: I, Sikon, am here—sloshed and in my cups.
A.: Hey, are you off your face?
Sikon: No, by Zeus of Mende—I am not even off my feet!

This reconstruction fits a comic and (within the realm of drunkenness) coherent scenario, though naturally the details cannot all be reconstructed with confidence. Sikon first acknowledges that he is drunk, then denies it: this abrupt volte-face is an attempted cover-up, motivated by the intervention of the other speaker (‘A.’). The likely tone of this intervention is suggested by οὖτος as a mode of address. This idiom, which does not survive elsewhere in Eubulus’ fragments, is particularly frequent in Aristophanes and Menander, where it either grabs attention or shows exasperation, and often does both. For a purely attention-seeking ‘hey’, the word-order οὖτος, πέπωκας; was available. On balance, therefore, I think it likely that A. is upset about Sikon’s drunkenness. ‘Sikon’ tends to be a cook’s name, so A. could be the man who has hired him. Sikon would in this scenario have delivered his first utterance without anticipating A.’s presence. A. could be present onstage already, or enter immediately and see Sikon reeling, or holding up a large cup (say). Sikon’s cover-up would be inebriatedly inept, since he cannot keep himself from a merry pun, whose point is that he clearly cannot be called drunk if he has not yet fallen on his back. He then chooses to swear by Zeus of Menda, a town famous for its wine. An alternative, if πέπωκας οὖτος was compatible with friendliness in a colloquial register free from politeness strategies, would be that A. is well disposed to Sikon, whose silly answer is drunken banter.

In either scenario, if Sikon stumbles (but does not fall) after κεκωθωνισμένος, it would give further point to A.’s question and to Sikon’s wordplay on ἀναπτω. Like the statue of Anacreon described in Leonidas of Tarentum 90 G–P, wine has made his legs wobble, but he has not yet fallen.

In summary, this fragment of Eubulus stands in need of restoration. The conjecture <οὖδέ γ’ ἀνα>πέπ<τ>ωκ’ produces a stageable snippet of dialogue and, unlike previous attempts, a good pun inside the fragment and a good logical flow in Athenaeus’ epitome.

University of Nottingham

OLIVER THOMAS
oliver.thomas@nottingham.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S000983881900048X

3 E. Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address* (Oxford, 1996), 154–5 argues that the implication of exasperation or rudeness was overplayed in earlier scholarship, while accepting that it is present in many of Aristophanes’ uses. D.J. Jacobson, ‘Vocative οὖτος in Greek drama’, *CPh* 110 (2015), 193–214 identifies an irritated tone in passages such as ours, but concentrates more on the attention-seeking function than on the tonal range of οὖτος addresses which are clause-initial.

4 Cf. οὖτος, καθεδεις at Ar. *Nub.* 732 for this order.

5 See E.W. Handley, *The Dyskolos of Menander* (London, 1965) on *Dys.* 889.

6 This repute is discussed soon after in Ath. *Deipn.* 1 (29d–f); see also ps.-Dem. *Lacrit.* 10, Men. *PCG* fr. 224.5, and x4 in the Hippocratic *Aff. Inter.*